



**Department of Commerce**

# **Research and Recommendations on Host Home Programs**

*Report on Host Home Licensing Exemption per  
RCW 74.15.020 and RCW 24.03.550*

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Report to the Governor and Legislature  
Brian Bonlender, Director

## Acknowledgements

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# Executive Summary

## Overview

During the 2016 regular legislative session, the Washington Legislature unanimously passed Substitute House Bill 2440,<sup>1</sup> which exempted host home programs<sup>2</sup> that serve youth from licensing requirements, including for foster care. While different host home program models exist,<sup>3</sup> the 2016 legislation focused on host home programs in Washington that match young people under age 18 who are experiencing homelessness, housing instability, or family crisis, with a community member who is willing to provide housing and other support to the young person. The nonprofit organizations that oversee host home programs provide case management and other supportive services to the youth and the host home/host family.

Governor Jay Inslee signed SHB 2440 into law on April 1, 2016, and it became effective June 9, 2016.

In addition to the licensing exemption and other requirements detailed herein, SHB 2440 also mandated that “[b]y July 1, 2017, the Department of Commerce must provide a report to the Governor and the Legislature that includes recommendations and best practices for host home programs.”

This report includes an overview of the existing host home programs in Washington that serve homeless youth; provides recommendations for the Legislature, host home programs, and the Office of Homeless Youth; and identifies areas for future study.

## Recommendations

The Office of Homeless Youth (OHY or office) recommends steps to address the findings detailed in this report, including policy changes and updates to statutes, strengthening the office’s support of host home programs, and better coordination among host home programs. The office also identified areas of future study, given that this report is the state’s first intensive review of host home programs, and that this is an emerging model without a large body of practice or existing research in the field. The office recommends that next steps include:

- Clarifying host home reporting requirements.
- Removing host home program funding restrictions.
- Strengthening the requirements for host home background checks.
- Creating a feedback loop between the Secretary of State and the OHY.

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<sup>1</sup> Washington State Legislature, HB 2440, (2015-2016), <http://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=2440&Year=2015>

<sup>2</sup> See page 3 for a definition of host home program.

<sup>3</sup> Other host home programs that do not serve unaccompanied homeless youth were interviewed for this report—more information about those programs is provided below.

- Strengthening OHY support to host home programs.
- Strengthening coordination among host home programs.
- Assessing existing licensing standards and requirements.
- Developing a public system response to meet the needs of older youth who cannot return home and are deemed not appropriate for foster care.

More details on the office's key findings and recommendations begin on page 35.

## Introduction

This report is the state's first look at the host home model in Washington state – it is intended to lay the ground work for future areas of study.

### Definitions

The definitions below apply throughout this report unless otherwise specified.

Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS): provides shelter, care, protection and/or support to people in Washington state; the largest state agency in Washington. DSHS is divided into six direct service administrations and two support administrations.

DSHS Children's Administration (CA): the public child welfare agency for the state of Washington.

Child Protective Services (CPS): a division within the DSHS-CA that investigates reports of child abuse and neglect.

Division of Licensed Resources: a division within the DSHS-CA that licenses and monitors foster homes, child placing agencies, and licensed group care facilities.

Host Home/Hosts Family/Host: a private home that volunteers to host youth in need of temporary placement and are associated with a host home program.<sup>4</sup> Generally, hosts provide family-like environments to youth and are expected to provide shelter, food, light transportation (if needed), day-to-day support, and mentoring, and to coordinate with the host home program to provide additional services the youth might need. For more information about host homes and host families, see Washington Host Home Program Snapshots, starting on page 21 of this report.

Host Home Program: a nonprofit, tax exempt entity that recruits and trains host homes/families to provide temporary homes to youth. Host home programs match youth with a host, provide case management to youth, and support to hosts. For more information about host homes and host families, see Washington Host Home Program Snapshots, starting on page 21 of this report.

Office of Homeless Youth Prevention and Protection Programs (OHY or office): a program within the Department of Commerce that leads statewide efforts to reduce and prevent

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<sup>4</sup> Washington State Legislature, *RCW 74.15.020(2)(o)(vi)*, <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=74.15.020>.

homelessness for youth and young adults. The OHY's efforts are guided by five priority service areas to ensure youth and young adults have:

- 1) *Stable Housing*: Every youth has a safe and healthy place to sleep at night.
- 2) *Family Reconciliation*: Families are reunited when safe and appropriate.
- 3) *Permanent Connections*: Youth have opportunities to establish positive, healthy relationships with adults.
- 4) *Education and Employment*: Youth have opportunities to advance in their education or training and obtain employment.
- 5) *Social and Emotional Well-Being*: Youth have access to behavioral and physical health care; services nurture each youth's individual strengths and abilities.

Homeless youth/unaccompanied homeless youth: any youth, aged 12-17, who is experiencing homelessness while not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian,<sup>5</sup> and is also not in the care and custody of DSHS.

Youth/child/juvenile/minor: any unemancipated individual who is under the chronological age of 18 years.<sup>6</sup>

## Background

The OHY 2016 report<sup>7</sup> noted that youth experience homelessness in every county in Washington.

- Of the 12,889 youth ages 12-24 that access homeless housing and services each year, 13 percent, or 1,676, are under 18.
- Of the 5,788 unaccompanied homeless students, 77 percent, or 4,457, are under 18.<sup>8</sup>

The report further noted that “[w]hile there are homeless youth in all regions of the state, the resources to help them are not. There are no beds for homeless youth in half of the 39 counties in Washington.”<sup>9</sup>

Given the lack of housing options available to youth in most counties, it is not surprising that communities respond with grassroots programs – like host homes – to ensure that young people who are homeless or unstably housed can stay connected to the community where they are staying, attending school, and have family or other critical personal connections.

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<sup>5</sup> Washington State Legislature, *RCW 43.330.702*, <http://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=43.330.702>.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

<sup>7</sup> Office of Homeless Youth Prevention and Protection Programs, “2016 Report,” <http://www.commerce.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/hau-ohy-report-2016-update.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Office of Homeless Youth Prevention and Protection Programs, “2016 Report,” (pg. 8), <http://www.commerce.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/hau-ohy-report-2016-update.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> *Id.* at 13.

In 2015, the Division of Licensed Resources – within the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) Children’s Administration (CA) – notified some nonprofit host home programs that host families providing care on a 24-hour basis to minor children who were not related to the host family were required to be licensed, in accordance with WAC 388-145-1310.<sup>10</sup> Additionally, given the host home programs’ role in arranging placements for minor children, the Division of Licensed Resources stated the programs fell under the definition of “agency” under RCW 74.15.020,<sup>11</sup> and the programs were likewise required to be licensed.

Upon receiving this notice, host home programs faced the decision of either ceasing to match youth with host families or encouraging volunteer host families to become licensed foster parents, which would subject licensed host families to placement decisions by Children’s Administration and render them unlikely to serve unaccompanied homeless youth because of the state’s foster home placement shortage.<sup>12</sup>

Legislation passed during the 2016 regular session (SHB 2440) exempted host home programs and host homes from the definition of “agency,” and, thereby, the requirement that host home programs and host families become licensed through the Division of Licensed Resources.<sup>13</sup> In addition to defining host homes as private homes that volunteer to host youth in need of temporary placement, RCW 74.15.020 states that host home programs operated by a tax-exempt organization are exempt from licensing if the program:<sup>14</sup>

- Does not serve children in the care and custody of the DSHS.
- Recruits and screens potential host homes, including performing background checks on individuals over age 18 residing in the homes through the Washington State Patrol or equivalent law enforcement agency, and performs physical inspections of host homes.
- Screens and provides case management services to youth in the program.

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<sup>10</sup> Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, *WAC 388-145-1310*, <http://app.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=388-145-1310>.

<sup>11</sup> Washington State Legislature, *RCW 74.15.020*, <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=74.15.020>

<sup>12</sup> Washington State Department of Social and Health Services – Children’s Administration, “DSHS Presentation on Foster Parent Recruitment and Retention 2016,” (January 2016), <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/3130951-H-Early-Learning-Human-Services-Foster-Care-1-12.html#document/p9/a321357>. CA again addressed the foster home shortage in a work session on Jan. 11, 2017. The Seattle Times, *State Grappling with Big Drop in Number of Foster Homes*, (Nov. 30, 2015), <http://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/politics/drop-in-foster-homes-leaves-state-struggling/>. Tacoma News Tribune, *Foster Home Shortage Sends Pierce County Kids Elsewhere* (July 5, 2016), <http://www.thenewstribune.com/news/politics-government/article89152802.html>. InvestigateWest, *Washington’s Troubled Foster Care Program Struggles to Keep Foster Parents*, (Oct. 28, 2016), <http://invw.org/2016/10/28/washington-states-troubled-foster-care-program-struggles-to-keep-a-key-group-foster-parents/>

<sup>13</sup> Washington State Legislature, *RCW 74.15.020(2)(o)*, <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=74.15.020>

<sup>14</sup> *Id.* See also SHB 2440 Final Bill Report: <http://lawfilesexst.leg.wa.gov/biennium/2015-16/Pdf/Bill%20Reports/House/2440-S%20HBR%20FBR%2016.pdf>

- Obtains written and notarized permission or limited power of attorney from the parent or legal guardian of the youth authorizing the youth to participate in the program, and update the authorization every six months as necessary.
- Provides mandatory reporting and confidentiality training.
- Obtains insurance for the program.

SHB 2440 also added host home programs to the list of mandated reporters in RCW 26.44.030.<sup>15</sup>

The legislation further requires that

- Any host home program that receives “local, state, or government funding”<sup>16</sup> must report the following information to the Office of Homeless Youth annually by Dec. 1 of each year:
  - The number of children the program served.
  - Why the child was placed with a host home.
  - Where the child went after leaving the host home, including but not limited to returning to the parents, running away, reaching the age of majority, or becoming a dependent of the state.
- Host home programs not receive more than \$100,000 per year of public funding, including local, state, and federal funding.
- A host home/family not receive any local, state, or government funding.

SHB 2440 also added a section to the Washington Nonprofit Corporation Act, RCW 24.03.550,<sup>17</sup> which requires:

- Host home programs to register with the Secretary of State.
- Host home program registration to include a notarized statement by the program that it meets the statutory requirements in RCW 74.15.020.<sup>18</sup>

This report is in response to the mandate that the Department of Commerce, through the OHY, provide a report to the Governor and the Legislature that includes recommendations and best practices for host home programs.

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<sup>15</sup> Washington State Legislature, *RCW 26.44.030*, <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?Cite=26.44.030>

<sup>16</sup> Washington State Legislature, Substitute House Bill 2440, (2016), <http://lawfilesexternal.leg.wa.gov/biennium/2015-16/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Laws/House/2440-S.SL.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> Washington State Legislature, *RCW 24.03.550*, <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=24.03.550>

<sup>18</sup> The statute clarifies that in registering with the Secretary of State, the Secretary “has no duty to confirm that a host home program is meeting its statutory requirements,” and that any filing with the Secretary does not imply an endorsement by the Secretary.

## Report Development and Scope

This report is the OHY's first examination of Washington's host home programs. The report profiles existing host home programs that specifically serve homeless youth, given that the 2016 legislation exempts from licensing host home programs and host families that serve minors. The report also looks ahead to how OHY can provide guidance to and alignment of host home programs.

The OHY used funding from its existing budget to contract and collaborate with consultant Erin Shea McCann, J.D., E.S. McCann, LLC, on the research and writing of this report.

The office identified four host home programs that served homeless youth, including programs in Island, Mason, Pend Oreille, and Pierce counties. All four host home programs also serve young adults (over age 18). Between February and April 2017, the consultant interviewed the following individuals who oversee those host home programs.

- Lori Cavender, Founder and Executive Director, Ryan's House for Youth, Coupeville, Whidbey Island: host home program serves ages 12-24.
- Martina Coordes, Program Director, Youth Emergency Services (Y.E.S.), Newport: host home program serves ages 13-18.
- Amy Klippert, Youth Host Home Program Coordinator and Housing Specialist, Shared Housing Services, Tacoma: host home program serves ages 16-24.
- Kim Rinehardt, Executive Director, Mason County HOST (Housing Options for Students in Transition) Program, Shelton: host home program serves ages 16-21.

The consultant interviewed three of the individuals at their agency offices, including Ryan's House for Youth, Shared Housing Services, and Mason County HOST. The consultant interviewed Martina Coordes at Y.E.S. by phone.

The consultant also worked with the office to develop and administer an online survey to the host home programs. This provided insight into the scope of host home program services; how host families are recruited, screened, and supported; how the programs are funded and operated; and the population of youth the programs serve. A summary of relevant findings from the survey is included in the Washington Host Home Program Snapshots section of this report starting on page 21.

The consultant also interviewed staff from other host home models in Washington, which are not subject to the requirements in RCW 74.15.020. Such models include programs that serve homeless young adults ages 18-24, and a program that places children in temporary host homes during a family crisis.

Programs that serve young adults include the host home programs operated by Accelerator YMCA in Seattle, and Bellevue Presbyterian Church in partnership with Friends of Youth in

Kirkland. Both programs share many similarities with those that serve unaccompanied homeless youth.

The consultant also interviewed the executive director of Olive Crest in Bellevue, which hosts the Safe Families for Children (or Safe Families) program. Through the program at Olive Crest, families can arrange for their children ages 0-17 to stay with Safe Families volunteer hosts for one day to three months while the family addresses issues of family instability, including short-term emergencies, hospitalization, or drug and alcohol rehabilitation.

Olive Crest Safe Families works with local churches and professional child care specialists. Accelerator YMCA, Friends of Youth, and Olive Crest are all licensed child-placing agencies that certify and manage licensed foster homes.

To gain a better understanding of host home programs in other states and perspectives of the Washington homeless youth and young adult service provider and advocacy community, the consultant interviewed the following entities, experts, and stakeholders:

- Darla Bardine, Executive Director, National Network for Youth.
- Ryan Berg, Program Manager, ConneQT Host Home Program, Avenues for Homeless Youth, Minneapolis, Minn.
- Tess Colby, Community Services Programs Manager, Pierce County Human Services, Tacoma.
- Kendan Elliott, Training and Technical Assistance Manager, MANY, Pittsburgh, Pa.
- Megan Gibbard, Director, A Way Home America, Seattle.
- Melinda Giovengo, Chief Executive Officer and President, YouthCare, Seattle.
- Nicole Guiberteaux, Host Homes Program Director, Accelerator YMCA, Seattle.
- Erin Hatheway, Program Manager, A Way Home Washington, Seattle.
- Jeff Judy, Executive Director Pacific Northwest Region, Olive Crest, Bellevue.
- Patricia Julianelle, Director of Program Advancement and Legal Affairs, SchoolHouse Connection, Washington, DC.
- Representative Ruth Kagi, 32<sup>nd</sup> Legislative District, Washington State House of Representatives, sponsored SHB 2440.
- Erin Lovell, Executive Director, Legal Counsel for Youth and Children, Seattle.
- Mindy Mitchell, Program and Policy Analyst, National Alliance to End Homelessness.
- Senator Steve O’Ban, 28<sup>th</sup> Legislative District, Washington State Senate, sponsored the Senate companion to SHB 2440, SB 6249.
- Chris Parvin, Centralized Services Administrator, Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, Olympia.
- Terry Pottmeyer, President and CEO, Friends of Youth, Kirkland.
- Morgan Silverman, Director of Homelessness Prevention, YouthCare, Seattle.
- Daniel Stultz, Host Home Outreach Manager, Lighthouse Youth and Family Services, Cincinnati, Ohio.
- Jim Theofelis, Executive Director, A Way Home Washington, Seattle.

- Liz Trautman, Director of Public Policy and Advocacy, The Mockingbird Society; Chair, Washington Coalition for Homeless Youth Advocacy, Seattle.
- Casey Trupin, Program Officer, Raikes Foundation; Chair, OHY Advisory Committee, Seattle.
- Derek Wentorf, Director of Homeless Youth Services, Friends of Youth, Kirkland.
- Jacqueline White, Director, Minnesota Host Home Network, Minneapolis, Minn.
- Shoshana Wineburg, Public Policy and Communications Manager, YouthCare, Seattle.

The consultant and staff from the OHY also met with young people and staff involved with the Youth Advocates Ending Homelessness (YAEH) Program at The Mockingbird Society in Seattle to discuss what young people believe are important considerations regarding host homes that serve unaccompanied homeless youth. The YAEH program engages homeless or formerly homeless participants between the ages of 13 and 24 in budget and policy change at the state level.<sup>19</sup> A summary of YAEH’s input can be found in Appendix A.

## Report Limitations

The OHY found that no entity coordinates or oversees host home programs in Washington, nor is there an entity coordinating host home work at the national level. There is also no existing body of literature that sets objective standards for host home programs or any longitudinal studies to determine host home program efficacy.

This report identifies areas where best practices need to be developed, and a proposed process for doing that. However, given the absence of research in the field and the differing perspectives among homeless youth service providers and advocates in Washington state, the OHY did not reach a comprehensive conclusion on recommended best practices for host home programs.

The OHY aims to better support host home programs that are innovative, community-based responses. A community-driven process should be conducted to identify best practices that align with long-standing programs in other states. The OHY looks forward to engaging with Washington’s host home community, programs across the nation that have demonstrated effective use of the host home model, current and former hosts, and young people and families who have utilized host homes to establish best practices beyond what this report identifies.

## Office of Homeless Youth Observations

The 2016 legislation – the first-time host home programs or host homes have been acknowledged in the Revised Code of Washington – illustrates that host home programs are a new response and approach to youth homelessness in Washington. In researching

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<sup>19</sup> The Mockingbird Society, *Youth Advocates Ending Homelessness*, <http://mockingbirdsociety.org/index.php/youth-advocates-ending-homelessness>

Washington's host home programs, the OHY learned a great deal about why and how these programs exist.

### **Response to System Gap and Lack of Housing Options**

Communities have developed host home programs for unaccompanied homeless youth in response to Child Protective Services' (CPS) decision to not screen-in a youth or family for services,<sup>20</sup> even though family conflict may be the driving force behind the youth's homelessness. Host home programs report that many youth they work with were not screened-in for services because CPS determined they do not meet the statutory definition of an abused or neglected child under RCW 26.44.020.<sup>21</sup> Host home programs are most likely to emerge in rural or low-density communities that lack shelter or other housing options for youth.

### **Function Best as a Community-Driven Response**

Host home programs appear to be most effective when community-driven and developed at the grassroots level as a response to an identified need. Host home programs tend to exist in smaller communities, especially where there is a built-in network of potential volunteer host families.

### **Variations in How Programs Operate**

There are a handful of host home programs currently operating in Washington, and while similar in many ways, they vary in how they operate, collect and report data, and what age range of youth they serve.

### **Appropriate Matching of Hosts With Youth**

Finding the right match between youth and hosts is foundational to the success of the model. Programs that match youth with hosts who have a shared identity are particularly successful. For example, matching youth who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ or GLBT) with hosts who share their identity has shown great promise. At the same time, not all youth experiencing homelessness are appropriate for host home programs, given the model's reliance on community volunteer host families. Host home programs and host families may not have the capacity or expertise to meet the needs of all homeless youth in the community, including young people with significant mental health or substance abuse issues.

### **No Central Coordinating Entity**

There is no central, coordinating entity among host home programs in Washington to ensure that these emerging programs have the resources, tools, and support necessary so that young people, regardless of the host home program's location, can experience safe and stable housing and achieve self-sustainability as they enter young adulthood. In absence of a central, coordinating entity, the OHY also found that communities can launch these programs without

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<sup>20</sup> See also WAC 388-15-013: "Who may receive child protective services?"

<sup>21</sup> Washington State Legislature, RCW 26.44.020, <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=26.44.020>

the knowledge of the OHY or other homeless youth service or host home providers in Washington.

**Role of the Office of Homeless Youth**

Given the office’s charge to lead the statewide efforts to reduce and prevent homelessness for youth and young adults, it is critical for the OHY to know where host home programs exist, what types of youth they serve, what outcomes the programs produce for young people, and where young people go if the programs cannot serve high-needs youth and there are no other shelter or housing options in those communities.

## National Landscape: Host Homes for Homeless Youth

Just as host homes are a relatively new response to youth homelessness in Washington state, these programs are a burgeoning response to youth homelessness at the national level as well. In 2013, the National Alliance to End Homelessness featured a blog post about host homes as a relatively new community-based response to youth homelessness.<sup>22</sup> In its 2015 “What Works to End Youth Homelessness?” report, the National Network for Youth included host homes as a prevention intervention in response to family crisis.<sup>23</sup>

### Rural Host Home Demonstration, Family and Youth Services Bureau

While there is a lack of robust literature and data at the local and national level, a 2008-2011 Rural Host Home (RHH) demonstration project funded by the Family and Youth Services Bureau provides some insight into the challenges behind creating and sustaining host home programs. Through the RHH demonstration project, the Runaway and Homeless Youth Training and Technical Assistance Center provided training and support to 20 grantees over a three-year funding period. The Runaway and Homeless Youth Training and Technical Assistance Center also collected output data over the grant cycle, with the goal of evaluating the RHH program model’s effectiveness in areas with a population of 20,000 or less.

Overall, the RHH demonstration project – which aimed to provide temporary shelter to youth in crisis – provided some insight into the barriers and challenges programs face when launching a host home program for youth, including:

- Licensing: requirements varied from locale to locale; some grantees spent most of the three-year funding cycle educating licensing agencies on the host home model.
- Outreach and community education: educating rural communities – where youth homelessness may be more “invisible” than in urban areas – about the need for services took a long time.
- Youth resistance: youth who have experienced trauma may liken host homes to foster care and are resistant to being placed in an intimate, home environment.
- Host home recruitment and retention: relying on volunteers to host homeless youth in their home is a lengthy and intensive process.

These lessons learned from the RHH demonstration, as well as output data, can be found in *Appendix D*. Ultimately, while the demonstration project provides guidance to emerging host home programs regarding potential challenges, it did not identify objective best practice standards for the host home model.

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<sup>22</sup> National Alliance to End Homelessness, *What is a Host Home?*, (2013), [http://www.endhomelessness.org/blog/entry/what-is-a-host-home1#.WN6\\_1TsrLD4](http://www.endhomelessness.org/blog/entry/what-is-a-host-home1#.WN6_1TsrLD4).

<sup>23</sup> National Network for Youth, “What Works to End Youth Homelessness?,” (2015), pg. 33, <https://www.nn4youth.org/wp-content/uploads/2015-What-Works-to-End-Youth-Homelessness.pdf>

## GLBT Host Home Program, Avenues for Youth, Minnesota

Beyond the RHH project, most inquiries about host home program development circles back to one of the longest-running host home programs in the country – the GLBT Host Home Program (GLBT HHP) offered through Avenues for Youth in Minneapolis, Minn., which was created in 1997.<sup>24</sup> The program serves gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) youth who are experiencing homelessness. This program and its staff have served as a resource for emerging host home programs around the country and here in Washington. The GLBT HHP, which serves young people ages 16-24, has developed a list of “key characteristics” for the program, including the importance of programs:

- Being small and community-driven, and involving local schools, faith communities, civic organizations and service providers.
- Being more like a transitional living program (longer length of stay), rather than an emergency housing option.
- Not receiving government funding.
- Not licensing host homes.
- Using a Delegation of Parental Authority document when minors participate in the program.
- Relying on hosts who are unpaid/volunteers (but offering small monthly stipends to help with increased costs, such as groceries).
- Providing youth in host homes with a small gift card every month.
- Empowering youth to choose to be in the program (youth are not “placed” in host homes).
- Working with partner agencies to refer youth they are already working with.
- Providing case management to youth while they are in the host home program.
- Being informed by a commitment to social justice and an awareness of systems of oppression.<sup>25</sup>

## Minnesota Host Home Network

In addition to these key characteristics identified by Avenues for Homeless Youth, a spring 2017 publication from the University of Minnesota’s Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare highlighted the work of Jacqueline White and the Minnesota Host Home Network (the

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<sup>24</sup> Avenues for Homeless Youth operates two other host home programs, including the ConneQT short-term (one week to three months) host home program for queer-identified young people and the Minneapolis and Suburban host home Program, which support all youth throughout Minneapolis and the Hennepin County suburbs. For more information about the host home programs operated by Avenues for Homeless Youth, visit: <http://avenuesforyouth.org/host-home-programs/>

<sup>25</sup> Simões, R., & Adam, K. (2017). Messy and Magical: A Closer Look at the GLBT Host Home Program. In A. Abramovich & J. Shelton (Eds.), *Where Am I Going to Go? Intersectional Approaches to Ending LGBTQ2S Youth Homelessness in Canada & the U.S.* (pp. 155-167). Toronto: Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press.

network).<sup>26</sup> The network launched in 2014 with the goal of expanding the host home model around Minnesota by providing technical assistance and networking support to communities. In the publication, the network shares its lessons learned in trying to expand the model, including the difficulty in achieving successful matches with youth and an unknown or “stranger” host family. The network also identified six best practices for host homes, developed through host home program site visits, “research into innovative practices in foster care and mentoring, and quarterly huddles with social service providers and community volunteers.” The Network’s best practices for host homes include:

- Youth agency: allowing youth to be the driving force in the youth-host matching process.
- Shared identity: matching youth with hosts who share their identity (race, class, queer identity).
- Supportive community: ensuring the host family is connected to and supported by the community around them.
- Support for youth and hosts: providing external support to ensure a stable youth-Host match.
- Shared expectations: creating a shared understanding between the youth and the host around what the living arrangement will look like.

The work developed by Avenues for Homeless Youth and the network appear to be the most comprehensive examples of host home best practice models, and many programs around the country have modeled their programs after the work done in Minnesota.

Given the absence of robust research regarding host home program efficacy and best practices at the national level, other states may look to Washington as the OHY engages more in this work.

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<sup>26</sup> White, J., *No One Can Thrive Alone: Exploring the Host Home Option*, CW360: The Impact of Housing and Homelessness on Child Well-Being, (pg. 33-34) (spring 2017), [https://www.cascw.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/CW360\\_Spring2017\\_WEB508.pdf](https://www.cascw.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/CW360_Spring2017_WEB508.pdf)

## Washington's Host Home Community

To learn more about how to strengthen Washington's host home community, it is helpful to first know more about the programs currently serving unaccompanied homeless youth.

Below is an overview of the youth, families, and individuals that participate in host home programs, and program snapshots of the four host home programs in Washington that serve unaccompanied homeless youth. The information that follows was collected through interviews with host home providers, young people who have experienced homelessness, service providers, and other experts, and through a survey administered to host home programs, as well as a review of materials provided by the programs.

### Youth, Family, and Host Home Profiles

#### The Youth and the Family

The families who use host homes programs as a housing option for youth do so for a variety of reasons. Parents/guardians may seek a safe placement for a youth due to parent/guardian incarceration. They may be experiencing homelessness or unstable housing or are struggling with addiction or mental health crises. Youth may seek out a host home program because they have been kicked out of the home or made to feel unwelcome or unsafe because they identify as LGBTQ. Youth in host home programs may not feel like they belonged at home, their parents did not love them and/or put them down all the time, or did not respect a youth's different values system.

Youth who participate in host home programs likely did not screen in for services when Child Protection Services was contacted, even if family conflict was an issue.<sup>27</sup> Families may seek out host home programs due to feeling like all other services have failed to meet their needs or provide relief in times of crisis. Meanwhile, youth report to providers that what they seek through the host home program are positive, caring, supportive adult relationships that allow them to complete their education, gain life skills, connect with caring members of their community, and work toward independence.<sup>28</sup>

#### The Host Homes/Families/Hosts

Providers typically define host families as community volunteers who provide family-like environments to homeless young people. Hosts may be individuals, couples, or families with children (young or grown and out of the family home). Per the changes brought about by SHB 2440, host families are not required to be licensed foster parents.

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<sup>27</sup> "Poverty, homelessness ... does not constitute negligent treatment or maltreatment in and of itself." RCW 26.44.020(16).

<sup>28</sup> This fits within OHY's charge to reduce youth and young adults experiencing homelessness through stable housing, permanent connections, education and employment, and social and emotional well-being.

Generally, hosts are expected to provide young people with shelter, food, light transportation (if needed), day-to-day support, mentoring, and to coordinate with the host home program on what additional services the youth might need. Host home programs expect hosts to be reliable, caring adults who are willing to support the diverse needs of the young people who live in their home. Depending on the needs and interests of the youth, hosts may provide a more family-like setting that provides young people with opportunities to learn and grow in a developmentally appropriate way that their peers from intact families may experience. While some youth may seek full family integration or a mentorship relationship with their host, others may want their host to be more like a stable roommate.

## **Washington Host Home Programs**

Like other host home programs across the country, the host home programs that serve unaccompanied homeless youth in Washington are organic, community-based responses to youth homelessness. The programs have launched, particularly in rural areas, because community members recognize the lack of shelter or other housing options and develop a response system so young people can remain connected to the community where they are staying, attending school, and likely have family or other critical personal connections.

Generally, host home programs are intended to be tailored to meet the needs of the community, the young people who participate in the program, and the hosts that bring a young person into their home. Population-specific programs – for example, those that match youth who identify as LGBTQ with hosts who share their identity – are particularly powerful and successful, given young people’s desire to connect and create community while also maintaining safe and stable housing.

Through program interviews, site visits, and an online survey, the OHY learned that the four host home programs in Washington that serve homeless youth provide a variety of services to the hosts/host families, to the young people matched with a host, and to the youths’ families. Below is a summary of program similarities across the four programs in Mason, Island, Pend Oreille, and Pierce counties, followed by individual program snapshots.

### **Family Engagement**

How host home programs engage a youth’s parent/guardian is – like all family reconciliation work – developed on a case-by-case basis and tailored to the individual needs of the youth and the family. While all of the host home programs must obtain parental consent for a youth to participate in the program and be matched with a host, how the parents/guardians choose to interact with the program and the youth thereafter depends on the circumstances of the family. More information follows in the program snapshots, but generally, the programs may offer mediation and diversion services to youth and parents, work with youth to file a Child in Need of Services (CHINS) petition (which is grounded in the desire to reconcile/reunify), or provide quarterly (or more often) written reports to parents/guardians on how a youth is

progressing. Some parents/guardians struggling with their own homelessness, mental health, or substance abuse issues may not be as responsive to services offered. Ultimately, all four host home programs note that this work looks different for every family, that they meet families where they are at, and offer services or referrals based on the family's needs.

### **Youth- Host Matching and Youth Choice**

The OHY heard clearly from Washington's host home programs – and from programs in other states – that what makes host homes “work” is the focus on relationships and centering young people in the decision-making process to take responsibility for making choices about where they will live and what that living arrangement might look like. To that end, the importance of *matching* versus *placing* youth with the right host, and giving youth a say in their match is central to all host home programs.

For many youth, “placing” or “placement” implies that the program will make decisions on a youth's behalf with no consideration of the youth's interests, needs, temperament, or goals. For other youth, those terms are synonymous with foster care, in which a state agency places youth in any available foster home, as opposed to a home that is the right match and can meet a youth's individual needs.

The concept of right-matching youth and hosts resonated with the young people in the YAEH (Youth Advocates Ending Homelessness) program at The Mockingbird Society, some of whom also spent time in foster care. The YAEH group highlighted that matching youth with an existing, natural – sometimes non-family – connection is preferred, noting that it is easier to “fix” a relationship than build a new one, and that holding on to the community a youth already has is critically important. The YAEH young people also acknowledged that matching youth with an existing connection might not always be possible. If that is the case and a youth must be matched with a “stranger,” the YAEH participants believed that youth should drive the matching process and that it is ideal if the host:

- Shares the youth's lifestyle and values and if not, someone who is respectful of those differences.
- Has some knowledge or experience working with and caring for youth or knowledge of youth developmental needs.
- Understands a young person's need for privacy and gives youth space to adjust, especially if they have come from a shelter or other group living situation where there is little to no privacy.
- Understands and supports the drug and alcohol abuse recovery process.
- Can have constructive, honest conversations and resolve conflicts in a supportive way.
- Has a clean home.
- Is friendly.
- Has some training on resiliency.

YAEH participants also talked about the importance of hosts as volunteers, rather than paid, as this gives young people the confidence that the host is interested in supporting young people for the “right” reasons, rather than to receive financial support.

Achieving the right match requires host home programs to do thorough intake and interview processes with young people, as well as prospective hosts. When it comes time to match a young person, the programs in Washington provide host profiles to the youth so they can get a better idea of who they might live with. Most programs then facilitate a meeting – typically, in the community – between the youth and prospective match, with the host home program attending as well.

The focus of the initial meeting is about determining whether the match is, in fact, promising. It is the youth, not the program or the host, who decides whether they would like to move forward with a host. Thereafter, the host home program typically facilitates a “business meeting” wherein the youth and prospective host discuss what it might look like to live together, create a living agreement – addressing culture, communication, boundaries, hygiene expectations, quiet hours, contribution to household chores, guests, etc. – and develop a move-in plan.

Another common element among host home programs, as it related to youth agency, is goal-setting in case management work. While the host home programs have varying expectations for a youth’s ongoing participation in the host home program, all develop goals and expectations in collaboration with the youth. More detail is provided below in the program snapshots.

### **Screening, Training, and Supporting Hosts**

As required by statute, all the host home programs conduct criminal background checks for prospective hosts. However, the statute does not provide guidance around what criteria programs should use to determine the fitness of prospective hosts, nor does it require that programs also perform a Child Protective Services (CPS) background screening – these screenings may provide different information than a criminal background check would produce.

Given the vagueness around background checks, host home programs thoroughly screen hosts through a series of interviews before permitting them to be eligible for matching with a youth. In the smaller, more rural communities, programs often know people who know prospective hosts, which creates an additional layer of reference checking for those programs. The host home programs also conduct physical inspections of the home to ensure it provides a safe and appropriate living environment for a young person. Some programs rely on the housing and safety standards utilized by local housing authorities, while other programs draw on foster

home licensing requirements and develop comprehensive safety checklists prior to a youth moving into a host home.<sup>29</sup>

Once a host passes the criminal background check and the program concludes they and their home are fit for matching, the program provides training to the hosts. Pre-match training requirements – curriculum and hourly commitment – vary from program-to-program, but generally involve three to eight hours of training on issues related to, among others:

- Mandated reporter duties of the host home program, as required by SHB 2440.
- Cultural competency.
- Communication and conflict resolution.
- Parenting versus mentoring.
- Trauma and working with someone who has experienced trauma.
- Supporting someone with complex needs.
- Homeless youth education rights.

The programs do not consider the screening and training phase the end of the process, as issues are likely to arise after a young person is matched with a host that will require guidance and support from the host home program. Information about the ongoing support that individual programs provide to hosts once a young person is matched with the host is detailed in the Program Snapshots section beginning on page 21. These supports include 24/7 crisis support in most programs, monthly (or more frequent) home visits, and regular contact by phone.

### **Case Management to Youth**

The host home programs highlighted below provide case management to the youth matched with host homes – some programs utilize one case manager to support both the youth and the host family, while other programs provide a separate case manager to the youth. Whatever the model, all four programs acknowledge that unaccompanied youth required elevated case management support due to their age and complex issues related to whatever family crisis brought them into the host home program.

Generally, case managers visit with youth more frequently in the first one to three weeks after the youth is matched with a host home, with that support tapering off as the youth gets settled. Even as the visits taper off, case managers are in phone contact with youth on a regular basis, and re-visit progress toward the goals the youth identified when they entered the host home program. Case management is tailored for the individual needs of the youth, and is a collaborative process developed with the youth, and may include, among other services:

- Family engagement or reconciliation.
- Educational support or vocational training needs.

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<sup>29</sup> See the “Home Safety Checklist” that is included in Ryan’s House for Youth’s host homes best practices manual, *Appendix E*.

- Medical assessment and treatment.
- Drug and alcohol assessment and treatment.
- Therapy or mental health counseling.
- Independent living skill-building.
- Accessing identification and personal records.
- Pregnancy and parenting support.

The following program profiles provide more details about programs' case management practices.

### **Community Partnerships**

All of the host home programs maintain strong and critically important connections to city and county governments, other service providers, local businesses, and, in most cases, the local CPS office. These connections support program operations (funding, supplies, volunteers to the program and volunteer opportunities for youth in host homes), provide referrals to the host home program, provide support to youth and hosts that the host home program may not have the capacity to provide, and drive community dialogue on the importance of providing a robust community-based response to youth homelessness.

Relationships between the host home programs and the local CPS office vary in nature, but many programs work closely with CPS case workers when a family needs services and does not screen in for CPS services. More details are provided below in individual program snapshots.

All the programs work closely with local schools, school staff, and/or the school district McKinney-Vento liaison.<sup>30</sup> In many instances, teachers, school counselors, or the school district McKinney-Vento liaison will refer a youth to a host home program, as these people often know about a youth's housing instability or risk of homelessness long before community providers will have worked with a youth.

The host home programs all note that without strong community connections, the host home program would not exist.

### **Data**

Tracking, analyzing, and reporting data looks different across all programs or may not exist at all. Some programs rely on the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to track the status and progress of youth in the host home program. Because youth under 18 cannot consent to having their personally identifiable information entered into HMIS, the programs input de-identified data. Some programs rely on spreadsheets or informal data tracking to determine what interventions are or are not working for youth.

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<sup>30</sup> McKinney-Vento liaisons are designated by local school districts to ensure homeless children and youth are identified and provided with services. Learn more: <http://www.k12.wa.us/HomelessEd/AssistanceAct.aspx>

All of the programs indicated a desire for a more sophisticated and formal way to manage, track, and report data regarding the host home program and the youth they serve.

## Washington Host Home Program Snapshots

Each of the four organizations in Washington identified by the office as operating host home programs that serve unaccompanied homeless youth are detailed below.

### **Mason County HOST Program, Shelton<sup>31</sup>**

The HOST (Housing Options for Students in Transition) program's mission is to eliminate homelessness crises for young people, ages 16-21, in Mason County while they complete their educational goals, including young people seeking a high school diploma, GED, or vocational/technical program certificate. The HOST program, which matched its first youth with a host home in 2013, focuses on stabilizing young people's living needs through temporary host home matches and working with them on planning for the future – by providing stable housing, students can focus on completing their education or job training programs rather than worry about where they will sleep at night.

HOST maintains close partnerships with local school systems, including the Shelton School District (CHOICE High School and Shelton High School) and North Mason School District (North Mason High School). The HOST program Executive Director has an office located at CHOICE High School, an alternative high school in Shelton, WA. HOST and the Shelton School District have a memorandum of understanding outlining that HOST will serve local youth, and the district will provide office space, computers, and phones to HOST. Because of these strong partnerships, HOST notes that the majority of young people referred to the program come through the program's connections to schools, including teachers, administrators, and support staff.

The executive director's primary role, in addition to program oversight, is to provide support to the dozens of host homes that stretch across Mason and Thurston Counties. Support to host families includes 24/7 crisis support, mediation when conflicts arise, and coordinating respite for host families. HOST also aims to provide some financial support to host families, mostly in the form of paying a portion of utility or cable bills (directly to the company) or providing gift cards for groceries. HOST believes this acknowledges that volunteer hosts absorb financial costs associated with adding an older adolescent to the family home, while also knowing how a stipend to the host home is spent.

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<sup>31</sup> The Mason County HOST program was spotlighted in February 2017 as a Promising Practice by Schoolhouse Washington. See <http://www.schoolhousewa.org/promising-practices-spotlight-host-families-offer-stability-to-students-experiencing-homelessness/>. It was also featured in the 2012 National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth publication, *Housing + High School = Success*, which highlighted communities in which communities worked with McKinney-Vento school district liaisons to create housing options for unaccompanied homeless youth. See <http://www.naehcy.org/educational-resources/housing-high-school-success>.

To be eligible for matching with a host home, youth must apply to the HOST Program, and the application is reviewed by a three-person committee, including the Executive Director, a HOST board member, and the school district McKinney-Vento liaison. Once youth are admitted, the majority are matched with someone they know – HOST notes that 60 percent of Mason County’s host families are known or related to the youth they are matched with. For youth who do not have a pre-existing relationship with the match, HOST presents them with the profiles of potential host families that match the youth’s interests and identity. After an initial and informal meeting in the community with the host family and HOST Program staff, the youth then selects whom they would like to live with. Thereafter, the HOST Program facilitates a “business meeting” wherein the youth and the host family discuss what it might look like to live together, create a living agreement, and develop a move-in plan.

Throughout this process, HOST also works with a youth’s parent or guardian to access resources so the family can stabilize with the goal of the family continuing to play a role in the youth’s life even if the youth cannot live at home. Parents and guardians must sign temporary custody agreements that allow host families to make educational and healthcare decisions while the youth is in the host home. The HOST Program works with the youth, the host family, and the parent or guardian to reassess custody agreements, which all parties must re-sign every six months. Any party can terminate the agreement at any time – if a youth moves to a new or different host home, a new agreement must be signed.

Once a youth is matched with a host family, they must attend school or a vocational/technical program, work with the HOST Program on budgeting and financial management, and volunteer in the community. HOST’s strong community relationships further support young people – the program has collaborated with a local credit union to set up savings accounts for HOST youth participants and with businesses that agree to provide volunteer opportunities to the youth.

HOST knows that youth require an elevated level of case management due to their age – the youth receive hands-on, trauma-informed case management through HOST. A part-time case manager and the executive director work directly with youth to engage in therapy or mental health counseling while they are participating in the host home program, and HOST occasionally partners with Olympia-based Community Youth Services to provide in-home counseling to youth and Hosts.

Student participants may also receive financial assistance from HOST – they are eligible for monthly \$50 stipends if they maintain school attendance and show progress towards goals they identified in their plan in collaboration with HOST staff. Youth typically use the stipends for hygiene products or other personal needs that are not met through HOST’s extensive network of community donations.

Throughout a youth’s stay in a host home, the HOST Program works on family engagement with the youth’s parent or guardian. Although some youth cannot return home due to too many years of family crisis and unmet needs, the youth not feeling welcome in the home,

parent/guardian mental health issues or drug or alcohol addiction, HOST notes that the program often helps change young people's perception of what it means to be family. Through host family matching and connection to the community, youth participants are empowered to create their own pathway toward adulthood while accomplishing educational and employment goals.

In addition to the host home program, Mason County HOST has a drop-in center that provides food, clothing, shoes, hygiene products, and additional items – from community donations – to young people experiencing homelessness. HOST also provides extensive information and referrals to young people with a focus on program diversion, meaning HOST directs youth toward systemic resources rather than defaulting to the host home program.

HOST notes that it has a close relationship with the local DSHS-Children's Administration office, including having a CPS social worker on the HOST Board of Directors. CPS and HOST engage in partnership problem solving and rely on each other to meet the needs of young people in the Mason County community.

HOST's philosophy is that through its host home program, it will change the entire fabric of Mason County – HOST is trying to stabilize youth who are experiencing homelessness, support them in reaching their educational goals, and incorporate them into the community.

# Mason County HOST Program

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## Program Launches in 2012



## As of April 2017

- 33 youth matched with host homes since launch.
- 40 total host homes available for youth ages 16-21.
- 13 youth currently matched with host homes.
- 12 youth wait list for a host home.
- 21 youth matched with a host home in the past year.
- Up to 30 youth receiving diversion services to avoid out-of-home placements.



## Staffing

- One full-time Executive Director who also provides case management services.
- One part-time Case Manager.
- 10 active volunteers support services for youth and program fund raising.



## Average Length of Stay

- 13 months is the average length of stay for youth in the program.



## Transitioning Out of Program

- Case management is available for 6-12 months after a student earns a high school diploma or GED.
- Transitions out of the care are planned with youth, hosts, and families.
- All youth complete an "exit survey" when they leave the program.

### **Ryan’s House for Youth, Coupeville, Whidbey Island<sup>32</sup>**

Ryan’s House for Youth’s (RHFY) mission is to provide safe, nurturing environments for homeless and at-risk youth to Whidbey Island youth, ages 12-24. RHFY believes that every child deserves the opportunity to live in a safe home while providing a place to feel secure enough to grow in character and integrity.

RHFY’s host home program, which started in 2011, provides housing support to unaccompanied homeless youth ages 12-24 until a longer-term housing option can be found. The host home program is dedicated to serving young people who are in school – young people must attend and stay in school to be eligible for, and stay in, the host home program. RHFY’s has eight host homes, with three of those homes specifically dedicated to serving youth who identify as LGBTQ.

RHFY’s executive director provides agency and host home program oversight, as well as support to the host families, including 24/7 crisis support, mediation when conflicts arise, and coordinating respite for host families. RHFY does not provide any financial stipend to host families, though it does provide clothing, toiletries, school supplies, and phones and phone minutes to the host family, if needed.

In 2016, RHFY created a host homes best practices manual (*Appendix E*) that identifies what the agency believes are the six keys to host home success, including:

- Protection: Create a safe, home-like environment with caring individuals in the local community to provide shelter to unaccompanied, homeless youth who want to finish their education.
- Education: Support host home families with training, coaching, and the feedback they need to successfully help support a youth out of crisis towards healthy self-sustainability.
- Inspiration: Provide hope to youth in crisis and create a network of caring individuals that will carry them forward as they work toward their goals and achieve their dreams for the future.
- Communication: Structuring an avenue for healthy dialog between youth and those who work alongside them.
- Commitment: A commitment to care, encourage and assist with basic needs, schooling, employment, and to provide a continued support network even after transitioning into self-sustainability.

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<sup>32</sup> Ryan’s House host home program was featured in a March 2017 story on King5 News, “Host Homes a Cheaper Way to Help Homeless Washington Youth,” <http://www.king5.com/news/local/host-homes-a-cheaper-way-to-help-homeless-washington-youth/415138797>. It was also featured in an October 18, 2015 opinion piece in The Seattle Times: “A Grass-roots Solution for Homeless Kids,” *Mowed Down by the State*, <http://www.seattletimes.com/opinion/a-grass-roots-solution-for-homeless-kids-mowed-down-by-the-state/>.

- Celebration: Establish appropriate systems to measure, reward and reinforce positive behaviors, motivate youth to do their best and commemorate all accomplishments large and small.

The best practices manual provides guidance to RHFY staff, prospective and current host home families, and the young people in the host home program regarding:

- Oversight of host homes.
- Youth case management expectations, including frequency of staff visits with youth matched with a host home.
- Parent/guardian family engagement practices (for youth under 18).
- Youth goal-setting and planning.
- Program commitments to youth, including providing transition-to-adulthood planning and supporting access to: medical care; educational support; identification; and food, and hygiene and other basic needs products.

The manual also includes all the forms related to program engagement, including youth intake, youth application, host family application, host home safety checklist, parent responsibility and childcare authorization, host home and youth living contract, mandated reporter forms, and many others.

Like the Mason HOST program, after youth are accepted into the host home program, RHFY staff provide them with the profiles of potential host families that match the youth's interests and identity. After an initial and informal meeting in the community with the host family and RHFY staff, the youth then selects who they would like to live with. Thereafter, RHFY facilitates a meeting with all the parties to narrow down what it might look like to live together, create a living agreement, and develop a move-in plan.

RHFY obtains a notarized "Parent Responsibility and Childcare Authorization Form" from the parent/guardian of a youth prior to the child being matched with a host home.<sup>33</sup> RHFY thereafter provides parents/guardians with a quarterly report written by the host family, which addresses the youth's progress in school, behavioral, social, and emotional well-being, and other information about the youth's interests and needs.

After a youth is matched with a host home, parents/guardians engage at varying levels with RHFY staff and the youth. RHFY does not have a staff person dedicated to family engagement work, but case managers facilitate family connection when appropriate and requested by the youth and the family. At any time, a parent/guardian, a youth, or a host family can terminate the agreement to participate in the host home program.

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<sup>33</sup> RHFY notes that the 2016 legislative change requiring programs to obtain re-authorization from parents/guardians every six months can be difficult because many parents/guardians "disappear" after they have found a safe place for the youth to live.

The host home program is supported by two paid staff, both working part-time, to support host families and youth. During the first week of a match, the case manager and/or executive director visit the youth in the host home at least twice and have daily phone contact with the youth. As the match gets settled, the case manager visits the youth weekly with regular phone contact, eventually tapering down to monthly in-person visits at the host home and regular phone contact. RHFY also facilitates monthly “team meetings” between the youth, host family, and RHFY staff so that any issues can be proactively addressed.

Prior to the Division of Licensed Resources’ intervention with host home programs, most referrals for unaccompanied homeless youth came through the local schools or the district’s McKinney-Vento liaison, but that stopped when the Division of Licensed Resources advised the host home program to cease matching minors until a licensing exemption was granted. Even though the host home program is now exempt from licensing, RHFY says the schools do not refer as many youth as in previous years. Other referrals to the program come through a youth’s parent/guardian or other family members, community service providers, and law enforcement or hospitals. RHFY has a working relationship with the local CPS office and they coordinate on the needs of individual youth when needed.

RHFY is considered a trauma-informed agency. All staff (three part-time; three full-time), board members (12), host families, and volunteers are required to receive trauma-informed and de-escalation training. RHFY’s executive director provides ongoing, monthly trauma training that is available to staff and host families. All staff have pastoral counseling, social work and/or human services degrees (or in progress).

In addition to the host home program, RHFY has a sprawling 17-acre campus, formerly a motel, near Coupeville on Whidbey Island where it offers case management services, and has a drop-in center (serving ages 12-24) and a housing program for young adults (ages 18-24). The on-campus housing program – emergency, short-term, and transitional housing – has capacity to house 30 young adults in 14 converted motel rooms. The drop-in center is run mostly by a robust volunteer community that does meal preparation, stocks a clothing and hygiene closet, and helps maintain the large rural campus. Through drop-in, youth and young adults can meet with one of RHFY’s five case managers or the executive director. The RHFY campus also has staff offices, a counseling office, and has plans to add an on-sight teen medical clinic.

RHFY has established a close partnership with the local public transit provider, which is located across the street from the RHFY campus. The agency successfully advocated to have a bus stop placed right outside the campus entrance so that youth and young adults can easily access the drop-in center and the young adults who live on campus can easily get to work and school around Whidbey Island.

# Ryan's House for Youth

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## Program Launches in 2011



## As of April 2017

- 15 youth matched with host homes.
- Nine total host homes available for youth and young adults ages 12-24.
- Three homes are specifically intended to serve youth who identify as LGBTQ.
- Two youth currently matched with host homes.
- Three youth matched with host homes in the past 12 months.



## Staffing

- Three full-time and three part-time staff.
- Dozens of volunteers who provide additional support.



## Average Length of Stay

Most youth stay in the program for 2-4 years.

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## Youth Adopted

Two host families have adopted youth they had been hosting after they turned 18.

RHFY is dedicated to ensuring that youth and young adults who want to stay connected to their home community can do so. RHFY firmly believes that keeping young people connected to their school of origin is critical for educational success, and in absence of shelter or other housing

options, the host home program provides an on-island housing response for unaccompanied homeless youth.

### **Shared Housing Services, Tacoma**

Shared Housing Services (SHS) offers individuals and families innovative and affordable solutions to prevent homelessness and foster independence through home sharing and transitional housing programs that include case management services and connections to vital community resources.

SHS's youth host home program was launched in 2013 and was modeled after the agency's Adult Homesharing program. The Adult Homesharing program began in 1991 and matches adults in need of affordable housing with people in the community who are will to provide a private bedroom in their home in exchange for rent or assistance. The SHS youth host home program serves young people, ages 16-24, in Pierce, south King, and north Thurston counties.

The unaccompanied homeless youth who participate in the SHS program are required to attend school or vocational or employment training, and comply with a host home living agreement, which outlines expectations around chores, quiet hours, and guests, among other things. The living agreement is created in collaboration with the youth, the host family, and an SHS case manager.

Youth are limited to a one-year stay in the program, which is modeled after rapid re-housing intervention programs,<sup>34</sup> which provide individualized case management and rental assistance that steps down over a 12-month period. Minors are not required to contribute toward rent, as they are focused on education – rental assistance is only required if the host home participant is employed. If a young adult (18 or older) is working, they contribute toward rent. Given the length of time, transition planning with the youth begins early in their host home stay.

SHS provides weekly support to host families after a youth is matched with the home, or as often as needed, and provides mediation between a host family and a youth when conflicts arise. SHS also provides financial assistance to the host home to help cover monthly rent. The amount of financial assistance provided to a host home is determined by the Fair Market Rent.<sup>35</sup> At this time, SHS does not provide 24/7 crisis support to host families.

The SHS executive director works closely with the youth host home program, which has two full-time staff: a program coordinator/housing specialist who oversees the program, recruits host homes, and provides support to the host families; and a case manager who provides case management to the youth participants.

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<sup>34</sup> U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, "Rapid Re-Housing," <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Rapid-Re-Housing-Brief.pdf>

<sup>35</sup> U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, *Fair Market Rents*, <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/fmr.html>

The youth case manager meets with youth once a week, or more often if needed, after they have been matched with a host home. The case manager works with the youth to address basic needs support, as well as identify educational and employment needs and services, and provide referrals for mental, physical, or substance use disorder treatment. SHS's transition planning with the youth typically involves learning to manage a budget, cook on a budget, and developing other independent living skills. The SHS staff who work with youth are required to attend ongoing trainings including diversity training and youth mental health training, among others.

SHS also collaborates with community allies to offer additional support to the youth in the host home program, including with the REACH Center of Tacoma (education and employment services, housing support); Vadis (job fairs, career planning, basic needs, life skill classes); Oasis Center (gender-identity counseling and advocacy); Consejo Counseling (mental health and substance disorder treatment/counseling); Goodwill Industries (job training); and TeamChild (civil legal aid). Due to the size of the Pierce County CPS office, SHS does not have a close relationship with CPS, but does refer youth to CPS when appropriate, as all SHS staff are mandated reporters.

Most referrals for youth to the host home program comes through schools – counselors, teachers, staff – or the district McKinney-Vento liaison, and community service providers.

SHS identifies host home families through outreach to community churches, social clubs, and community centers. SHS carefully screens host home applications even before administering a background check. SHS expects its host home providers to act as mentors to the youth in their home, and provides extensive training to host home providers. Training includes parenting versus mentoring; conflict resolution; communication expectations with SHS and the youth; post-traumatic stress disorder; self-care and supporting someone with complex needs; and cultural competency.

SHS obtains a notarized parent/guardian consent form, allowing the youth to participate in the host home program. SHS also requires parents/guardians to sign a form assuring that they will not receive any monetary benefit on the child's behalf while the child is living out of the home. Many of the families SHS works with in the youth host home program are homeless themselves or facing incarceration.

# Shared Housing Services

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## Program Launches in 2013



## As of April 2017

- 14 total host homes available for ages 16-24.
- Two minors currently matched with host homes.
- Three minors matched with host homes in past 12 months.
- Average of three minors matched with host homes each year.



## Staffing

Six full-time staff.



## Average Length of Stay

One year is the average length of stay for minors.



## Implementing "Exit Surveys"

SHS will implement host home program "exit surveys" for youth exiting the program in 2017.

SHS's youth host home program's greatest asset is its strong collaboration with other providers in Tacoma/Pierce County, including recent discussions with the local juvenile court administrator on partnering with SHS to provide respite host homes as part of a diversion program for youth when they come into contact with law enforcement.

### **Youth Emergency Services (Y.E.S.), Newport**

Youth Emergency Services is based on the premise that all youth have the right to be loved, respected and live in an environment free from violence, drugs and harmful behaviors. The agency provides street outreach services and case management to homeless and at risk youth between the ages of 12 and 18 years living in rural Pend Oreille County. Through Y.E.S., youth access food, clothing, hygiene products, school supplies, and other basic needs support.

Y.E.S.'s host home program started in 2008, and since then has matched dozens of unaccompanied youth with volunteer hosts in the community. Youth in the host home program must participate in school or an employment readiness program, with some aiming to join the military after turning 18. Youth must maintain sobriety while in a host home and comply with a behavior contract that is jointly developed by the youth, the host, and Y.E.S.

Youth matched with host homes receive comprehensive case management from Y.E.S.'s youth-designated case manager, who checks in weekly (or more, as needed) to ensure the host is meeting the youth's needs. The case manager also refers host home youth to any other services they may need, purchases supplies for the youth, and assists the youth in signing up for benefits, employment services, and securing a driver's license, birth certificate, and Social Security card, if necessary.

The Y.E.S. program director reviews a prospective host family's application, and the county Human Resources Department does criminal background checks for Y.E.S. at no cost.<sup>36</sup> Prior to a match, Y.E.S. provides tailored, one-on-one training to host families that considers their needs and life experiences. The training generally includes modules on youth development and youth goal-setting, mental health and substance abuse issues, mandated reporter duties, discipline policies, and crisis response. Y.E.S. has a close relationship with the local CPS office, which does the mandated reporter training for all Y.E.S. staff, volunteers, and hosts.

Y.E.S. is currently developing a more formal and comprehensive host family training program, which would require prospective hosts to receive 10 hours of training. Training will include the topics listed above, focus on applicable laws and rules and provide an introduction to supporting agencies – CPS, law enforcement, mental health and substance abuse providers, schools, and juvenile justice.

Y.E.S. offers hosts 24/7 crisis support to hosts, both in-person and by phone, and meets with the host family, when requested. When youth are first matched with a host home, Y.E.S. provides the host with a \$200 stipend to help with groceries and gas money as the youth gets settled into the home.

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<sup>36</sup> Like other host home programs, this background check does not currently include a CPS check, but Y.E.S. is interested in partnering with CPS and other host home providers to determine how these can be done.

Throughout the matching process, Y.E.S. works with parents to sign a permission slip to allow their child to remain in a host home. Y.E.S. is implementing a notary requirement to the permission slip process, per the requirements of RCW 74.15.020.<sup>37</sup> Y.E.S. also work with youth on family engagement and reunification, when safe and appropriate.

Y.E.S. also has a practice of working with the youth to file a CHINS petition,<sup>38</sup> when appropriate, so that there is some court oversight of the out-of-home placement and so the court can order services for the youth and the parent/guardian. Y.E.S. estimates that it files a CHINS petition for about 20 percent of the unaccompanied youth they work with, and the court does not grant all petitions filed by the youth.

Y.E.S. has a close relationship with and works with CPS on CHINS petitions and coordinates to meet the needs of youth in host homes even when a petition is not granted. Y.E.S. also partners with Family Crisis Networks, which serves homeless adults and victims of domestic violence, and local mental health and substance abuse providers when youth need more intensive services. Unaccompanied youth are referred to the host home program by CPS, school staff (counselors, teachers, and administrators), community service providers, and parents or guardians of youth. Y.E.S. notes that most of the school referrals come directly from school staff, rather than through the district McKinney-Vento liaison.

In addition to the host home program, Y.E.S.'s street outreach and case management programs help youth navigate health care systems and connect them with medical, dental, vision, and mental health providers. It also works to connect youth with other community supports, including education support, and life and independent living skills programs. When safe and appropriate, Y.E.S. works with youth on family engagement and reunification. Many of the youth Y.E.S. serves are disconnected from family due to parent or guardian incarceration or death or because the young person has left home due to feeling unsafe, unwelcome, or because of a parent or guardian's substance abuse in the home.

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<sup>37</sup> Washington State Legislature, *RCW 74.15.020*, <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=74.15.020>

<sup>38</sup> University of Washington Court Improvement Training Academy, *Benchbook*, <http://www.uwcita.org/benchbook/chapter-26-child-in-need-of-services-chins/>

# Youth Emergency Services (Y.E.S.) Program

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## Program Launches in 2008



## As of April 2017

- Five total host homes available for youth ages 13-18.
- Zero minors currently matched with host homes.
- One 18-year-old finishing high school is currently matched.
- Four youth matched with host homes in past 12 months.



## Staffing

- One Program Director.
- One Office Manager.
- One Grant Writer.
- Two Case Managers.



## Training

All staff, board members, and volunteers are given mandated reporter training by Child Protective Services.

Y.E.S. is a community-driven agency that is interested in moving host home collaboration and learning opportunities forward.

## Key Findings

This report is the OHY's first in-depth examination of host home programs in Washington that serve youth. Through research and community interviews, the OHY determined that host home programs exist because of several system gaps. Due to the patchwork and informal way these programs have evolved, the programs themselves have gaps. The key findings below drive the Recommendations and Areas for Future Work sections later in the report.

- Washington lacks a system-level response for unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness, housing instability, or family crisis who do not screen in for CPS services and cannot return home, or for whom family reconciliation efforts have been unsuccessful. Options are especially limited for young people in rural or low-density areas where there exists no shelter or housing options for unaccompanied homeless youth.
- Host homes are a community-based response to a systems-level failure, but host home programs do not have adequate funding to meet the needs for all unaccompanied homeless youth in their communities. SHB 2440 (2016 Session) further restricts the programs' ability to receive funding from city, county, or state agencies.
- Host home programs show great promise, especially for populations of youth who are particularly vulnerable or who are disproportionately represented among the homeless youth population, including youth who identify as LGBTQ and youth of color. Population-specific host home programs that match young people with hosts who have a shared identity help youth to create a strong sense of belonging and community.
- Host home programs and host families may not have the capacity or expertise to meet the needs of all homeless youth in the community, including young people with significant mental health or substance abuse issues.
- While host home programs are innovative, community-driven, and cost-effective, in that they do not require communities to build brick and mortar shelters or youth housing programs, they operate in isolation of each other and are mostly disconnected from the OHY's statewide response to reduce and prevent homelessness for youth and young adults. Currently, there exists no central coordinating entity among host home programs in Washington that tracks compliance with SHB 2440.
- Given the lack of a host home program coordinating entity, there are no agreed-upon objective standards for host home programs, nor is there guidance around what data host home programs can or should measure, as it relates to youth well-being outcomes and program efficacy.
- In absence of host home programs, unaccompanied homeless youth may have no safe living alternative if they live in communities where no or limited shelter or housing stock exists and are not screened in for CPS services. In many ways, host home programs, which provide a stable place to live and case management services, can be considered an important intervention that keeps youth off the street.

## Recommendations

The OHY identified recommendations and areas for future study after conducting the following outreach and research:

- Interviewing host home programs currently serving unaccompanied homeless youth.
- Administering an online survey to programs serving unaccompanied homeless youth.
- Interviewing host homes programs that serve homeless young adults.
- Meeting with youth and young adults who have experienced homelessness.
- Interviewing local and national experts on homeless youth and young adult issues.
- Speaking with staff at host home programs in other states.

A summary of stakeholder input that influenced these recommendations can be found in *Appendix B*.

### Clarify Reporting Requirements

**Context:** For programs that match youth under 18 with hosts, RCW 74.15.020(2)(o)(vi)<sup>39</sup> requires:

“Any host home program that receives local, state, or government funding shall report the following information to the [OHY] annually by December 1st of each year: The number of children the program served, why the child was placed with a host home, and where the child went after leaving the host home, including but not limited to returning to the parents, running away, reaching the age of majority, or becoming a dependent of the state.”

Programs that serve homeless young adults (18-24) are exempt from this reporting requirement, while the Safe Families program at Olive Crest is required to report to the OHY, even though that program does not specifically work with homeless youth.

**Recommendation 1:** Require host home programs that serve homeless young adults and receive government funding to annually report program outcome data to the OHY, so that the state has a stronger grasp of host home program outcomes for homeless young adults. This will better enable the office to understand how all host home programs fit into the housing service array.

**Recommendation 2:** Clarify that only those programs that match unaccompanied homeless youth or young adults are subject to this reporting requirement, which would exclude programs like Safe Families that does not specifically serve homeless youth or young adults.

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<sup>39</sup> Washington State Legislature, *RCW 74.15.020(2)(o)(vi)*, <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=74.15.020>.

**Recommendation 3:** Recommend that programs utilize the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to collect and transmit data whenever it is within the capacity of a host home program.

## **Remove Host Home Program Funding Restrictions**

**Context:** RCW 74.15.020(2)(o)(vi) mandates that host home programs “shall not receive more than [\$100,000] per year of public funding, including local, state, and federal funding.”

**Recommendation:** Remove the limit on government funding to host home programs. The OHY is a funder of statewide strategies to prevent and end youth homelessness. As host home programs become more popular as a community response to youth homelessness, they will require financial support in order to be a viable option. The OHY should have the funding authority to invest in host home models as part of the continuum of supports that fill gaps and match the needs of communities across the state. Federal, state, and local government should have the authority to invest in their communities’ identified strategies to address youth homelessness, which may include host homes. Recommendations contained within this report call for increased accountability and coordination among host home programs. Expanded responsibility measures should be paired with increased opportunities to obtain funding.

Additionally, the OHY is unclear if the state has the authority to restrict a program’s ability to access non-state funding, including funding from cities, counties, or the federal government, or how this restriction impacts multi-service agencies that receive government funding for its other programs.

## **Strengthen Requirements for Host Home Background Checks**

**Context:** RCW 74.15.020(2)(o)(i) requires host home programs to perform Washington State Patrol or equivalent law enforcement agency background checks on individuals over the age of 18 residing in host homes, but it does not provide guidance on what programs should do with the information learned in those checks. Furthermore, not all adverse actions against children will be identified through a criminal background check, including whether an individual has a founded finding for child abuse or neglect.

**Recommendation 1:** Require that host home programs look to DSHS Secretary’s List of Crimes and Negative Actions for Use by Children’s Administration<sup>40</sup> to determine which actions disqualify an individual from having unsupervised access to minors.

**Recommendation 2:** Require host home programs to obtain FBI fingerprint checks from prospective hosts that wish to be matched with youth.

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<sup>40</sup> Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, WAC 388-113-0020, <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=388-113-0020>

**Recommendation 3:** Request history checks of substantiated findings of child abuse and neglect from Children’s Administration for individuals residing in the host home.

## **Create a Feedback Loop between the Secretary of State and the OHY**

**Context:** RCW 24.03.550<sup>41</sup> requires that host home programs that serve minors register with the Secretary of State and include a notarized statement to the Secretary that the “host home program meets all of the statutory requirements as provided for in RCW 74.15.020.”

However, the legislation does not require the Secretary of State to provide this information to the OHY. Thus, the OHY has no way of knowing which host home programs serve unaccompanied homeless youth, unless identified through community referrals or relationships. Likewise, the OHY has no way of knowing whether those programs are meeting the statutory requirements outlined in RCW 74.15.020.

The International Student Exchange statute<sup>42</sup> provides guidance on this issue, as it requires international student exchange visitor placement organizations to register with the Secretary, but further mandates a feedback loop with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction:

“On a date established by rule by the secretary of state, the secretary of state shall provide annually to the superintendent of public instruction a list of all currently registered international student placement organizations. The superintendent of public instruction shall distribute annually the list of all currently registered international student placement organizations to all Washington state school districts.”

**Recommendation:** Amend RCW 24.03.550 to require the Secretary of State to provide the OHY with an annual list of host home programs that are registered and provide services to unaccompanied homeless youth. This would enable the OHY to better track the growth of host home programs and identify what housing options exist in all communities.

## **Strengthen OHY Support to Host Home Programs**

**Context:** The OHY website highlights the programs funded by the OHY.<sup>43</sup> Although host home programs do not currently receive funding through the office and are prohibited from receiving more than \$100,000 in public funding, it would be helpful to the agencies that operate host home programs that serve homeless youth to know what the statutory requirements are for

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<sup>41</sup> Washington State Legislature, RCW 24.03.550, <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=24.03.550>

<sup>42</sup> Washington State Legislature, RCW 19.166.030, <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=19.166.030>

<sup>43</sup> Washington State Department of Commerce, Office of Homeless Youth, <http://www.commerce.wa.gov/serving-communities/homelessness/office-of-youth-homelessness/>

those programs, including what is required to be reported to the Secretary of State and to the OHY.

Additionally, no guidance exists to guide how host home programs should report the specific metrics identified in RCW 74.15.020(2)(o)(vi) to the OHY.

**Recommendation (1):** Post host home program requirements to the OHY website.

**Recommendation (2):** Create and circulate a standard form to programs that serve youth and that receive government funding so that host home programs can meet the requirements of RCW 74.15.020 in a streamlined and equitable way. The OHY should circulate the form prior to the annual Dec. 1 deadline to ensure timely and streamlined submission.

## Areas for Future Study

### Develop Best Practice Standards for Host Home Programs

**Context:** While individual host home programs have developed strong practices to serve unaccompanied homeless youth, the practices may not be consistent across programs.

**Recommendation:** Identify and conduct a process to find and develop comprehensive and objective best practice standards for host home programs that serve unaccompanied homeless youth in Washington. These standards should align with long-standing programs in other states.

Resources would need to be allocated for the OHY to facilitate a community process to engage host home programs, host families, youth and young adults and their parents and guardians, and other stakeholders, to identify objective best practices for host home programs, with a special focus on those programs that serve unaccompanied homeless youth. The office envisions the development of objective best practices may include issues related to:

- What age youth are best suited to be served through a host home program. For example, some programs serve youth as young as 12 and 13, while others only serve youth age 16 and 17.
- Family engagement and reconciliation.
- Parental consent practices and creation of standard forms.
- Program support to youth or families in the filing of a CHINS, emancipation, or third party custody petition.
- Training curriculum and number of required hours for hosts/host families, especially around providing trauma-informed, culturally competent care, as well as training on youth development, de-escalation, and dispute resolution.
- Identifying potential hosts through a youth's existing network of caring adults, thereby increasing the likelihood of permanency (not unlike what occurs in the foster care system when foster youth are placed with relatives/kin or other existing adult connections).
- Recruiting hosts with shared identities, such as LGBTQ, with the community of youth the program serves so that youth feel a sense of belonging and community.
- Providing financial support to hosts to offset the cost of groceries, gas, utility bills, or other non-monetary support to hosts.
- Case management standards, including determining whether youth should have a separate case manager from the person who supports host families, and whether there should be training or certification requirements for the agency staff who provide case management to youth.

- Confidentiality of youth information, and how information is presented to prospective hosts.<sup>44</sup>
- Criteria for physical inspections of host homes.
- The importance of creating host home micro-communities or support groups so that hosts can look to others in their community for crisis and respite support, and so that young people are surrounded by a community, rather than just a single host home – more eyes are on the youth to ensure safety and emotional and physical well-being.<sup>45</sup>
- Equity standards for program management.
- Creating a grievance process for youth matched with host homes.
- Data collection and reporting around youth outcomes and program efficacy.
- Creating program advisory councils so that host home programs remain focused on their mission – advisory councils may include community members who have engaged with the host home program, as either young people or as hosts.<sup>46</sup>
- Transparency and availability of best practices once they are developed.

## Assess Existing Licensing Standards and Requirements

**Context:** Existing requirements and standards for overnight youth shelters and programs that serve older adolescents are subject to the same licensing requirements as group care facilities, group homes, crisis residential centers, staffed residential homes, and other facilities. The existing licensing requirements should be reviewed to ensure they are appropriate for the population being served.

**Recommendation:** Conduct an analysis, with robust community input, to determine if existing licensing requirements and standards for shelters and programs that serve older adolescents are adequate and overseen by the appropriate entity. Host homes should be included in such an analysis to identify commonalities with programs that serve the same population and whether a new category of licensing should be developed.

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<sup>44</sup> Friends of Youth’s application materials for the young adult host home program it collaborates on with Bellevue Presbyterian Church, includes some guidance on confidentiality. The young adult application notes that “Host households will not see this application. Personal information will not be disclosed to host households, with the exception of serious medical conditions (i.e. fatal peanut or pet allergy, seizures) and then only with your consent.”

<sup>45</sup> The host home community could look to the Mockingbird Family Model (MFM) for guidance on creating host home micro-communities. Though MFM is a foster care delivery model, the concept could be utilized in the host home community as well, given that the focus of the MFM is to establish a “sense of extended family and community around the participating children, youth, and families.” See <http://mockingbirdsociety.org/index.php/what-we-do/mockingbird-family-model>; [http://mockingbirdsociety.org/images/stories/docs/MFM\\_Brochure\\_2010.pdf](http://mockingbirdsociety.org/images/stories/docs/MFM_Brochure_2010.pdf).

<sup>46</sup> The Avenues for Homeless Youth GLBT host home program in Minnesota has an Advisory Council that “helps ensure that the program stays informed by a philosophy of solidarity and a passion for social change. It has always been a multi-racial, multi-gendered, and cross-generational council of activists.” See <http://avenuesforyouth.org/glb-host-home-program/>

## **Strengthen Coordination Among Host Home Programs**

**Context:** Centralized discussions around systemic homeless youth issues are critical so that the OHY and Children’s Administration understand the underlying issues that bring youth into host home programs in the first place. These discussions may identify what work needs to be done regarding whether the definition of child abuse or neglect results in pushing unaccompanied homeless youth outside of CPS’ services and how other programs are failing to meet the needs of unaccompanied homeless youth and their families.

**Recommendation:** Establish a host homes network to support host home programs. Washington should look to the Minnesota Host Home Network for lessons learned, including what role a network support can play in developing objective best practice standards, providing technical assistance to emerging programs, and facilitating conversations among host home programs, hosts, and the families and youth that rely on host programs.<sup>47</sup> Creating a host home network and learning community – in which providers share lessons learned, address program challenges, problem-solve, and staff individual cases in an anonymous way – will help inform the OHY and Children’s Administration regarding systemic child welfare and youth homelessness crossover issues.

## **Develop a Public System Response to Meet the Needs of Older Youth who Cannot Return Home and are Deemed not Appropriate for Foster Care**

**Context:** A key finding of this report is that host home programs have emerged as a community response to a lack of services, shelter or housing options for young people who may be experiencing homelessness, housing instability, or family crisis, but are not screened in for services because CPS determined the youth does not meet the statutory definition of an abused or neglected child. This pervasive issue must be tackled through a systemic approach that defines clear public-system responsibility and accountability to ensure that families are reconciled when possible and youth are protected through safe and stable housing.

**Recommendation:** Develop a policy proposal for consideration in the 2018 legislative session. The OHY Advisory Committee has already convened a workgroup to develop recommendations on this issue.

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<sup>47</sup> Minnesota Host Home Network, *Minnesota Host Home Network*, <https://mnhosthome.net/>

## Appendix A: Stakeholder Meeting with Youth Advocates Ending Homelessness (YAEH)

Following is a summary of the conversation the OHY staff and the contracted consultant had with the young people who participate with the YAEH program at The Mockingbird Society. The information was gathered through “silent conversation,” in which youth participants responded in writing to questions posed on large flip chart paper. The young people rotated through the room and responded to their peers’ questions, concerns, and ideas about host home programs that serve unaccompanied homeless youth.

### **Would having a temporary place to live – like a host home – have helped you and your family receive support and resources you needed to reconcile with your family of origin?**

- Yes:
- Still would! I can be mentally at peace and still love family from a distance.
- But need host homes who are open to hosting youth coming out of rehab (for drug or alcohol abuse).
- I did not have any services/there were not any services in my hometown.
- I am my own family, so yes.
- No:
- Safe, healthy reunification is not and was not a possibility.
- It would have been a Band-Aid.
- I was kicked out – the longer I was away, the more they would feel no need to take me back. Also, they would never take me back as long as there was an alternative.
- Maybe: Need all options for youth.
- No way to know for sure.

### **What does an ideal, safe host home look like to you?**

- A home where you can be your true self and be comfortable about your gender, sexuality, religion, and culture.
- Someone who:
- Provides clear rules (preferably written).
- Is nonjudgmental.
- Is culturally sensitive.
- Knows how to raise children.
- Is not doing it for the money.
- Can effectively communicate – addressing issues as they arise and knowing how to communicate in an age-appropriate way.
- Has good boundaries.
- Is stable financially and emotionally; employed.
- Is aware of the factors causing mental deterioration.
- Has a plan/process for discipline.

- Gives you the option to leave.
- Provides privacy and security.
- In a neighborhood you are familiar with.
- Healthy emotional atmosphere; not a chaotic home, not too many people.
- Pet friendly home.
- Being able to do things with the host when you feel like it – social activities, fun things – but not required.
- A place to sleep – that is it.

**Which do you prefer: being matched in a host home with a stranger or being matched with a pre-existing, natural support?**

- Prefer natural connection:
- Easier to fix a relationship than build a new one.
- Because there are no pre-conceived intentions.
- Important to hold onto community youth already has.
- Either:
- So long as there is support provided to both parties.
- Sometimes you just want any help you can get.
- With the exception of knowing a little more about the host before making a final decision.
- Some people do not have natural supports.
- Need to understand host home provider’s motive.
- Truly want to help?
- Comfortable with troubled roommate?

**How would you feel being matched with a stranger host/host family?**

- Apprehensive, nervous, vigilant, uncomfortable, guilty, unworthy.
- Some youth said that despite these feelings, they would be willing to give it a chance.
- This is better than the strangers who run shelters.
- Natural relationship development is preferred over forced.
- Some youth said they simply would not want to be matched with a stranger.
- More comfort being matched with a stranger as they got older – when younger, they were more scared, guarded, and unwilling to open up to a stranger.
- So long as there is a warm “handoff” by a case manager or social worker.
- More comfortable with people who are volunteers, rather than paid – this gives young people the confidence that the host is interested in supporting young people for the “right” reasons, rather than to receive financial support.
- If matched with a stranger, youth expressed needing someone who:
- Shares the youth’s lifestyle, values; if not, someone who is respectful of those differences – fear of differences creates conflict.
- Has some knowledge or experience working with and caring for youth.

- Understands a young person's need for privacy and gives youth space to adjust, especially if they have come from a shelter or other group living situation where there is no privacy.
- Understands and supports the recovery process (drug and alcohol abuse).
- Can have constructive, honest conversations without conflict.
- Has a clean home.
- Is friendly.
- Has some training on resiliency.

**What supportive adult relationships did you have when you became homeless?**

- 12-step or recovery community.
- Extended family or friends of family.
- Ex-foster parent(s).
- Best friend.
- Teacher(s).
- Mother, thankfully.
- Pastor.
- Advocacy partners: The Mockingbird Society, Passion to Action.
- Service providers: outreach staff, case managers, and employment specialists.

**What supportive adult relationships do you wish you had/could have?**

- Functioning parents, family.
- Mentor in recovery (from drug/alcohol abuse).
- Someone who knows how to handle youth with ADHD.
- Sincere, natural people.
- Father figure.
- Stable, reliable adult, role model, someone who sets a good example.
- Someone who can pay for the things you need.
- Someone who can provide help getting into housing.

## Appendix B: Community Stakeholder Input

Below is a summary of the input collected through interviews with Washington host home programs currently serving unaccompanied homeless youth and programs serving young adults, local and national homeless youth and young adult homelessness experts, and host home program staff in other states.

### **Perspectives on Host Homes Model and State Oversight**

- The beauty of a community-based response is that it is not foster care – caring people in community stepping up to do a job that government either cannot or will not do.
- This is happening in communities all over the country: people asking other people to take care of their children because of a family’s inability or unwillingness to do so.
- Government cannot supersede the reality of how communities respond.
- Our state must have a workable option for this population of youth, one in which youth are safe and hosts are supported.
- Until a systems response that meets the needs of older youth is created, this is what we have and we need to strengthen it.
- What do you do with the 15-year-old who does not screen in for CPS services? Or who does not want to go into foster care or there are not enough placements? We need a system response for those youth.
- Transparency is what makes host home programs publicly digestible.
- In absence of state oversight, programs must be an open book with their data and their practices given their work with vulnerable populations of youth.
- Matching with host homes and failure to push for child welfare responsibility means that youth miss out on financial, educational, and medical benefits they would be provided through foster care, including:
  - Extended Foster Care eligibility (through age 20).
  - Medicaid until age 26.
  - Educational supports and scholarships available to foster youth.

### **Perspectives on the Importance of Community Partnerships**

Concern over whether host home programs have clinical expertise to serve vulnerable youth who have experienced trauma: some agencies partner with clinical agencies to provide case management, which is a good model.

### **Perspectives on Youth Agency and the Match Process**

- Youth should receive the results of the Washington State Patrol background check for the host (with host’s consent): youth should know who they are potentially living with.
- Host Home programs need to provide intentional planning for when the youth turns 18 – cannot drop them without services.

### **Perspectives on Confidentiality**

- Programs need clear rules on whether and how it shares information about the youth with the volunteer host.
- Youth should be able to give consent for how much information is shared about them with prospective hosts.

### **Perspectives on Licensing Host Homes**

- Programs are willing to do what needs to be done to be compliant, but the focus should be on the youth and helping them move forward.
- Regulations need to make sense given the needs of the youth, the realities of the community volunteers willing to be hosts, and what government is willing to do to support them.
- Need to reexamine all shelter and homeless youth program licensing “Certification” of host homes might be a more appropriate route: licensing “light” so that programs can retain flexibility and ensure that people in the community can be matched with youth.
- Believing that good/nice people volunteering is enough is not fair to young people who have experienced trauma.
- Our state must ask more of programs and hosts given what is at stake for young people.
- Regulations might encumber host home programs so much that the homes end up just like foster care: too much focus on the nuts and bolts and not enough on the relationship between youth and host, which is what makes these programs work.
- Families who host may not be able to meet stringent requirements of foster care licensing, including how large the home must be, how many power outlets it has, etc.

### **Perspectives on Age of Youth Served**

- Concern around serving children as young as 12 or 13: a long time to plan for children’s stability.
- This age seems better fit for child welfare – where is CPS for youth this young?
- 16-year-olds or 17-year-olds feeling unsafe or unwelcome is different than a parent abandoning a 13-year-old, which should result in foster care placement.

### **What Host Home Programs Want and Need**

- Flexible funding: new state restrictions prohibit programs from supporting youth despite great need.
- Ability to provide financial support to host families: willing people who have existing relationships with youth cannot step up sometimes due to financial constraints – maintaining relationships is critical for youth.
- Need stronger incentives for hosts to participate: they are opening up their home and taking on liability.
- Programs need to be able to do CPS background checks.
- Want support and guidance on what types of training and education hosts should have.
- Want guidance on what host home certification might look like.

- Need data management and evaluation support: methods for collecting data and program evaluation (outcomes dashboard development).

## Appendix C: Host Home Additional Resources

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## Appendix D: Rural Host Home (RHH) Demonstration Project Final Report

# RURAL HOST HOME (RHH) DEMONSTRATION PROJECT FINAL REPORT

12/15/2011

RHH Demonstration Project in Review

The RHH Demonstration Project consisted of 20 grantees in 14 states and Guam. RHYTTAC provided on-site assessments of each grantee as well as on-going training and technical assistance throughout the three year grant cycle. The RHYTTAC services were designed to leverage strengths and address needs of the demonstration project group as well as individual grantees.

# Rural Host Home (RHH) Demonstration Project Final Report

## RHH DEMONSTRATION GENERAL OVERVIEW

### What is the RHH Demonstration Project?

The project was originally funded by the Family and Youth Services Bureau in September 2008 for a 3 year project period ending September 30, 2011. It was designed as a demonstration project to enable ACF-HHS-FYSB to evaluate the effectiveness of utilizing host home models to provide Basic Center Services in rural areas. As such, one key requirement to qualify as a RHH grantee was to serve an area with a population of 20,000 or less.

### Where were the grantees?

The RHH Demonstration Project originally consisted of 20 grantees in 12 states and 1 territory:

- 1) Redwood Community Action Program, CA;
- 2) San Diego Youth and Community Services, CA;
- 3) United Services, Inc., CT;
- 4) Sanctuary, Inc. GU;
- 5) Hawaii Youth Services Network, HI;
- 6) Children's Home and Aid Society of Illinois, IL;
- 7) Youth Services Bureau of the Illinois Valley, IL;
- 8) Every Woman's Place, MI;
- 9) Third Level Crisis Intervention Center, Inc., MI;
- 10) Catholic Charities, Inc., MS;
- 11) CEDARS Youth Services, NE;
- 12) Community Action Partnership of Western Nebraska (formerly Panhandle Community Services), NE;
- 13) Born2Win Ministries, Inc., NC;
- 14) Child and Family Services of New Hampshire, NH;
- 15) Families and Youth, Inc., NM;
- 16) Oswego County Opportunities, Inc., NY;
- 17) Community Action Partnership of Yamhill County, OR;
- 18) Looking Glass Youth and Family Services, Inc., OR;
- 19) Northeast Rural Resources dba YouthDotCom, WA; and,

## 20) Fremont County Group Homes, WY

One grantee, United Services, Inc., declined funding and never initiated rural host home services; while a second grantee, Catholic Charities, relinquished after the first year of the funding cycle. The remaining grantees continued to develop and operate a Basic Center Program utilizing a Rural Host Home Model for service provision. Of the grantees funded for the demonstration project 40% had operated a Host Home model program prior to receiving this funding while the remaining 60% were new to the host home model. A total of 18 grantees remained in the project the full 3-year cycle.

## RHYTTAC Services Overview

### **Initial On-site assessment: who completed it and what did it consist of?**

The on-site assessment was completed by RHYTTAC consultants that either operate programs in rural areas or have expertise in rural service provision and RHY programming. The consultant pool consisted of 8 consultants that were deployed based on availability and area of expertise. The on-site assessment included a strengths-needs assessment to identify areas of promising approaches and well as areas of need. The assessments were utilized to develop an overall Training and Technical Assistance Plan for the demonstration group as well as individual grantees.

### **Quarterly Webinars and Annual Meetings:**

RHYTTAC conducted quarterly webinars with the RHH Demonstration Project grantees to review progress, discuss barriers to developing and implementing host home services, provide resources to address the challenges including written publications, mining the expertise of other demonstration project participants for possible solutions to the barriers, and arranging additional on-site technical assistance for struggling grantees. The grantees attended annual meetings to discuss overall progress, obtain training on various issues including conducting outreach in rural areas, recruiting, screening, training, and retaining host home families, and sustainability of the project beyond federal funding.

### **Other Training and Technical Assistance Services:**

Grantees were also provided opportunities to attend land-based training and technical assistance workshops/clinics held in cities throughout the country; participate in distance learning opportunities through more 140 e-learning courses (topics included: Adolescent Suicide Prevention, Residential Child and Youth Care Professional Curriculum, Disaster Preparedness, and The Cycle of Poverty and Homelessness) as well as more than 40 webinars (topics included: Outreach, Providing Culturally Sensitive Services – 5 part series focusing on specific populations of youth GLBTQ, African American, Latino, Asian/Pacific Islander, and Native American, and The Hidden Workforce- 4 part series focused on effectively recruiting, training, and retaining volunteers); participate in the Community of Practice subgroup forum designed by RHYTTAC specifically for the RHH Demonstration Project participants where they were able to discuss trends and challenges of operating a rural host home with their peers; and obtain resources from the RHYTTAC website including Tip Sheets (topics included: Outreach, Community Education, Trauma Informed Care, Social Networking: Tips for Communicating with Youth Where They Are, and HEARTH Act) e-newsletters (topics included: Trauma Informed Care,

Eligibility, Competent Youth Work, and Program Management and Evaluation) and sample case file forms.

## Challenges of Developing and Operating a Rural Host Home Basic Center Program

Grantees, which included both established youth-serving agencies and newcomers to runaway and homeless youth services, documented a number of challenges to providing host home services in rural communities, including:

- **Licensing:** Several grantees had difficulty getting State and/or local licensing agencies to license host homes for the runaway and homeless youth population. Some grantees spent the majority of their 3-year funding period working with licensing agencies to educate them on the model. Grantees found the licensing process difficult to maneuver as each state and locale had specific licensing requirements and varying lengths of time to become licensed.
- **Outreach and Community Education:** Oftentimes, homelessness in rural communities is invisible, as young people bounce from couch to couch in the homes of friends. Many grantees found that they had a hard time convincing local communities of the need for their services. Another issue faced by some grantees was their relative ‘newness’ to the community where they were viewed as not being fully invested in the community and/or they were viewed as outsiders that did not understand the community.
- **Youth Resistance:** Runaway and homeless youth, who often come from violent or traumatizing homes, were hesitant to be placed back in a home environment. One grantee said “I think the host home model can be confusing to kids who are in crisis. It seems a bit too much like foster care and the intimacy factor is a bit concerning to them. We work very hard on overcoming this issue with every kid we shelter.”
- **Recruitment and Retention:** The host home model often requires families to volunteer to take in homeless youth in communities where homelessness is hidden as in rural areas the majority of homeless youth are easily spotted in a park or on the street (i.e. in rural communities, youth are doubled-up with relatives, staying with various friends (“couch-surfing”), etc.). As a result, finding and retaining host home families was difficult and labor intensive. Grantees that were not licensed to license host homes were reliant on the child welfare system to train the host homes they had recruited which resulted in a delay between the time of recruitment and the time the host home family could participate in required training to become licensed and some families decided not to participate after the delay. Other families that participated in training conducted by child welfare decided they would prefer to work with youth in the foster care system rather than runaway and homeless youth in part due to the difference in the rate of reimbursement that child welfare provided versus the rate the grantee could provide.

## Solutions Grantees Implemented to Address Barriers

Faced with the challenges outlined above, the grantees worked to implement solutions, including:

- **Licensing:** Some grantees had success becoming licensed to license host homes as this license provided them the opportunity to recruit and train their own host homes. Other grantees were in areas that did not require host homes to be licensed which reduced the time necessary to approve a host home for service. Still others found themselves continuing to work on the licensing process in the third year of a 3-year grant cycle.
- **Outreach and Community Education:** Grantees reported that persevering with a multi-pronged outreach approach slowly generated acceptance in the communities they served. Grantees implemented several strategies to increase awareness of youth homeless as well as demonstration of investment in the community, including:
  - Recruiting and hiring staff from within the community;
  - Establishing agency offices within the community;
  - Participation in community fairs and events;
  - Media campaigns including advertising on local radio, providing news releases to local newspapers, participating in interviews, and web-based outreach and information;
  - Presentations to faith-based and civic groups, law enforcement, adult homeless programs, and schools; and,
  - Publication of flyers and brochures highlighting the specific needs of runaway and homeless youth in the community.
- **Youth Resistance:** When addressing the barrier of youth resistance to accepting basic center services through a host home placement grantees relied heavily on input from youth and implemented several strategies, including:
  - Surveying youth to determine their concerns related to accepting host home based shelter services;
  - Developing “profiles” of the available host home families to allow youth to have some information about the host home family and, to the extent possible, have some choice as to which host home they would enter;
  - Using testimonials of other youth the program had served to allay some fears; and,
  - Being diligent in describing the intent of basic center program services to runaway and homeless youth including the goal of family reunification and being developed specifically for youth not in the custody of either child welfare or juvenile justice.
- **Recruitment:** Grantees identified and implemented a number of strategies to recruit host home families, including word-of-mouth, recommendations from other host home providers, media advertising, capitalizing on social media outlets including their agency websites, presentations to faith-based and civic groups, and participating in community events.
- **Retention:** When addressing the challenge of retaining host home families grantees used a variety of techniques, including:
  - Holding events or social gatherings (i.e. holiday parties, potlucks, peer support meetings);
  - Providing respite assistance;
  - Consistent contact by case workers including having on-call staff for emergency response to host family needs/concerns 24/7;
  - Providing ongoing training; and,

- o Giving monetary incentives when possible (i.e. stipends for transporting youth, payment for providing room and board, etc.).

## **By the Numbers: Overall Outputs and Outcomes of the Demonstration Project**

While grantees felt that they could have accomplished more with a longer grant, they believed that they had made real progress at a system level. “We began a culture shift from ‘all services are in the main community and you need to access them there,’ to ‘let’s work to keep ALL youth in their own community and make the connections there.’” RHYTTAC utilized the funded grant applications to determine that the grantees had proposed to have a total of 84 host homes with 128 beds available for RHY by the end of the 3-year cycle. In August 2011 RHYTTAC conducted a survey of the RHH Demonstration Project participants and determined that the grantees had a total of 67 host homes with 99 beds available for RHY. RHYTTAC also reviewed the funded grant applications and determined that the grantees had proposed serving 791 RHY annually through residential services and an additional 7,441 non-residentially over the course of the 3-year cycle. Grantee self-report on the survey indicated that 730 youth had received residential services over the course of the grant cycle while 1,880 had received non-residential services.

RHYTTAC utilized reports generated by Computer Science Corporation, the Training and Technical Assistance provider for Runaway and Homeless Youth Management Information System (RHYMIS) to analyze several data elements related to providing basic center services through the rural host home model. RHYTTAC has developed a spread sheet (see attached) that includes the following data elements for each grantee in the project:

- 1) # of host homes and/or host home beds proposed
- 2) # of youth grantee proposed to serve annually
- 3) # of youth actually served – residentially
- 4) # of youth actually served – non-residentially
- 5) # of males and # of females served
- 6) Average # of days of service – residentially
- 7) Average # of days of service – non-residentially
- 8) # of youth without an exit date in RHYMIS
- 9) # of youth without critical issues (CI) identified in RHYMIS
- 10) # of youth without services provided identified in RHYMIS
- 11) # of youth with history of foster care placement
- 12) # of youth with history of juvenile justice placement
- 13) # of youth with the following Critical Issues identified at entrance: Family Dynamics, Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity, Housing, Education, Mental Health, Physical Health, Abuse or Neglect, Alcohol or Drug, and Pregnant or Parenting Youth
- 14) # of youth receiving these services: Counseling, Peer Counseling, Education, Basic Support, Physical Health Care, Psychological Care, Substance Abuse Assessment and/or Treatment,

Substance Abuse Prevention Education, Community Service Learning, Aftercare, Written Aftercare Plan, and Preventive Services

Prior to discussing the data that is available one must be aware of some of the issues that were evident when reviewing the RHYMIS reports:

- 1) Some grantees failed to submit data in each year of the grant cycle which could have been due to:
  - a. Grantee data entry errors including failing to designate youth with the special “ZZ” code set by CSC as an identifier for youth accessing services in order to differentiate youth accessing RHH services versus non-RHH basic center services;
  - b. The grantee actually serving no RHH youth during the reporting period covered in a given report; and/or,
  - c. The grantee failing to report through RHYMIS for youth served with FYSB funding.
- 2) Some grantees failed to provide “Exit Dates” for some (or all) of the youth they served in a particular year which resulted in:
  - a. Incomplete data in terms of critical issues and services provided to those youth;
  - b. Inability to accurately calculate the number of days a youth received services;
  - c. Skewing of data in terms of the average number of days youth were served residentially and non-residentially; and,
  - d. Skewing of data in terms of the number of youth presenting with specific critical issues (CI) and/or the number of youth receiving specific services.

With the afore mentioned issues in mind RHYTTAC utilized the available data from Fiscal Years 2009, 2010, and 2011 to determine the following outputs and outcomes for the RHH Demonstration Project:

In FY 2009, 19 of 20 grantees continued to provide RHH services although 4 grantees (Every Woman’s Place, Fremont County Group Homes, San Diego Youth and Community Services, and Sanctuary, Inc.), did not have any data in RHYMIS.

Of the remaining 15 grantees the following outputs could be delineated from the data in RHYMIS:

- 237 youth received services (96 residentially and 141 non-residentially);
- 42% were male and 58% were female;
- Average length of stay in residential services was 17 days;
- Average length of non-residential services was 113 days;
- 88 youth (37%) did not have Exit Date, Critical Issues, and/or Services Provided data in RHYMIS;
- 10% of youth had a history of foster care placement;
- 16% had a history of juvenile justice placement;
- Critical Issues (CI) identified at the time of entry, with the percentage of youth that identified the issue, included:
  - Family Dynamics – 56%
  - Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity – 3%

- Housing – 21%
- Education – 35%
- Mental Health – 29%
- Physical Health – 13%
- Abuse/Neglect – 22%
- Alcohol/Drug – 27%
- Pregnant/Parenting Youth – 6%
- Services Provided (SP), with the percentage of youth receiving those services, included:
  - Counseling – 53%
  - Peer Counseling – 12%
  - Education – 28%
  - Basic Support – 47%
  - Physical Health Care – 17%
  - Psychological Care – 12%
  - Substance Abuse Assessment/Treatment – 2%
  - Substance Abuse Prevention/Education – 24%
  - Community Service Learning – 2%
  - Aftercare – 42%
  - Written Aftercare Plan – 13%
  - Preventive Services – 31%

In FY 2010, 18 of 20 grantees continued to provide RHH services and all 18 submitted RHYMIS data related to youth accessing RHH services.

The following outputs could be gleaned from the data available in RHYMIS for FY 2010:

- 331 youth received services (174 residentially and 157 non-residentially);
- 47% were male and 53% were female;
- Average length of stay in residential services was 58 days;
- Average length of non-residential services was 163 days;
- 67 youth (20%) did not have Exit Date, Critical Issues, and/or Services Provided data in RHYMIS;
- 6% of youth had a history of foster care placement;
- 7% had a history of juvenile justice placement;
- Critical Issues (CI) identified at the time of entry, with the percentage of youth that identified the issue, included:
  - Family Dynamics – 74%
  - Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity – 4%
  - Housing – 29%
  - Education – 54%
  - Mental Health – 46%
  - Physical Health – 17%

- Abuse/Neglect – 32%
- Alcohol/Drug – 31%
- Pregnant/Parenting Youth – 3%
- Services Provided (SP), with the percentage of youth receiving those services, included:
  - Counseling – 73%
  - Peer Counseling – 6%
  - Education – 41%
  - Basic Support- 61%
  - Physical Health Care – 23%
  - Psychological Care – 13%
  - Substance Abuse Assessment/Treatment – 3%
  - Substance Abuse Prevention/Education – 24%
  - Community Service Learning – 4%
  - Aftercare – 52%
  - Written Aftercare Plan – 16%
  - Preventive Services – 33%

In FY 2011, 18 of 20 grantees continued to provide RHH services, although 5 grantees, (Every Woman's Place, Hawaii Youth Services Network, Oswego County Opportunities, Inc., San Diego Youth and Community Services, and Sanctuary, Inc.), did not have any data in RHYMIS.

Of the remaining 13 grantees the following outputs could be delineated from the FY11 data in RHYMIS:

- 289 youth received services (150 residentially and 139 non-residentially);
- 43.3% were male, 56.4% were female, and .3% (1 youth) was Transgender F to M;
- Average length of stay in residential services was 38 days;
- Average length of non-residential services was 143 days;
- 34 youth (12%) did not have Exit Date, Critical Issues, and/or Services Provided data in RHYMIS;
- 2% of youth had a history of foster care placement;
- 1% had a history of juvenile justice placement;
- Critical Issues (CI) identified at the time of entry, with the percentage of youth that identified the issue, included:
  - Family Dynamics – 84%
  - Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity – 5%
  - Housing – 31%
  - Education – 57%
  - Mental Health – 53%
  - Physical Health – 22%
  - Abuse/Neglect – 29%

- Alcohol/Drug – 42%
- Pregnant/Parenting Youth- 4%
- Services Provided (SP), with the percentage of youth receiving those services, included:
  - Counseling – 81%
  - Peer Counseling – 6%
  - Education – 44%
  - Basic Support – 76%
  - Physical Health Care – 25%
  - Psychological Care – 17%
  - Substance Abuse Assessment/Treatment – 4%
  - Substance Abuse Prevention/Education – 35%
  - Community Service Learning – 2%
  - Aftercare – 48%
  - Written Aftercare Plan – 11%
  - Preventive Services – 41%

Based on the available RHYMIS data for the entire 3-year grant cycle the following outputs could be delineated:

- 857 youth received services (420 residentially and 437 non-residentially);
- 44.4% were male, 47.5% were female, and .1% were Transgender F to M;
- Average length of stay in residential services was 40 days;
- Average length of non-residential services was 141 days;
- 189 youth (22%) did not have Exit Date, Critical Issues, and/or Services Provided data in RHYMIS;
- 6% of youth had a history of foster care placement;
- 7% had a history of juvenile justice placement;
- Critical Issues (CI) identified at the time of entry, with the percentage of youth that identified the issue, included:
  - Family Dynamics – 73%
  - Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity – 4%
  - Housing – 27%
  - Education – 50%
  - Mental Health – 44%
  - Physical Health – 18%
  - Abuse/Neglect – 28%
  - Alcohol/Drug – 34%
  - Pregnant/Parenting Youth – 3%
- Services Provided (SP), with the percentage of youth receiving those services, included:
  - Counseling – 70%
  - Peer Counseling – 7%

- Education – 38%
- Basic Support – 62%
- Physical Health Care – 22%
- Psychological Care – 14%
- Substance Abuse Assessment/Treatment – 3%
- Substance Abuse Prevention/Education – 28%
- Community Service Learning – 3%
- Aftercare – 48%
- Written Aftercare Plan – 13%
- Preventive Services – 35%

RHYTTAC also utilized RHYMIS data to determine the youth's living situation at the time of entrance and their living situation at the time of exit. RHYTTAC analyzed the data per agency as well as for the full cohort annually and then for the entire three year grant cycle. RHYMIS data that is currently collected reflects outputs rather than outcomes however by analyzing the data elements, "living situation at entrance" and "living situation at exit", one can glean basic outcomes of accessing RHH services.

RHYTTAC has developed a spread sheet (see attached) that includes the following data elements for each grantee in the project:

- 1) Living Situation at Entrance (LSEN) – Private Residence
- 2) LSEN – Shelter
- 3) LSEN – On Street
- 4) LSEN – Residential Program
- 5) LSEN – Mental Hospital
- 6) LSEN – Correctional Institution/Detention
- 7) LSEN – Another Living Situation
- 8) LSEN – No Response Provided
- 9) Living Situation at Exit (LSEXIT) – Private Residence
- 10) LSEXIT – Shelter
- 11) LSEXIT – On Street
- 12) LSEXIT – Residential Program
- 13) LSEXIT – Mental Hospital
- 14) LSEXIT – Correctional Institution/Detention
- 15) LSEXIT – Another Living Situation
- 16) LSEXIT – Do Not Know
- 17) LSEXIT – No Response Provided

As stated previously in this report, in FY 2009, 19 of 20 grantees continued to provide RHH services although 4 grantees (Every Woman's Place, Fremont County Group Homes, San Diego Youth and Community Services, and Sanctuary, Inc.), did not have any data in RHYMIS.

Of the remaining 15 grantees the following outcomes related to "living situation at exit" could be delineated from the data in RHYMIS for the 237 youth served in FY09:

- Living Situation at Entrance – Private Residence: 82%
- LSEN – Shelter: .8%
- LSEN – On Street: 8%
- LSEN – Residential Program: 5%
- LSEN – Mental Hospital: 1%
- LSEN – Correctional Institution/Detention: .4%
- LSEN – Another Living Situation: 3%
- LSEN – No Response Provided: 0
- Living Situation at Exit – Private Residence: 44%
- LSEXIT – Shelter: .8%
- LSEXIT – On Street: 1%
- LSEXIT – Residential Program: 11%
- LSEXIT – Mental Hospital: .4%
- LSEXIT – Correctional Institution/Detention: 2%
- LSEXIT – Another Living Situation: 2%
- LSEXIT – Do Not Know: 2%
- LSEXIT – No Response Provided: 37%

Again in FY 2010, 18 of 20 grantees continued to provide RHH services and all 18 submitted RHYMIS data related to youth accessing RHH services.

The following outputs could be gleaned from the living situation at entrance and exit data available in RHYMIS for FY 2010:

- Living Situation at Entrance – Private Residence: 81%
- LSEN – Shelter: 5%
- LSEN – On Street: 9%
- LSEN – Residential Program: 2%
- LSEN – Mental Hospital: 0%
- LSEN – Correctional Institution/Detention: 3%
- LSEN – Another Living Situation: 2%
- LSEN – No Response Provided: 1%
- Living Situation at Exit – Private Residence: 56%
- LSEXIT – Shelter: 2%
- LSEXIT – On Street: 4%
- LSEXIT – Residential Program: 15%
- LSEXIT – Mental Hospital: 0%
- LSEXIT – Correctional Institution/Detention: .3%
- LSEXIT – Another Living Situation: 2%
- LSEXIT – Do Not Know: 1%
- LSEXIT – No Response Provided: 19%

As stated previously, 18 of 20 grantees continued to provide RHH services in FY11, although 5 grantees (Every Woman's Place, Hawaii Youth Services Network, Oswego County Opportunities, Inc., San Diego Youth and Community Services, and Sanctuary, Inc.) did not have any data in RHYMIS.

Of the remaining 13 grantees the following outcomes related to living situation at exit could be delineated from the FY11 data in RHYMIS:

- Living Situation at Entrance – Private Residence: 76%
- LSEN – Shelter: 3%
- LSEN – On Street: 10%
- LSEN – Residential Program: 7%
- LSEN – Mental Hospital: .7%
- LSEN – Correctional Institution/Detention: 1%
- LSEN – Another Living Situation: 4%
- LSEN – No Response Provided: 0%
- Living Situation at Exit – Private Residence: 62%
- LSEXIT- Shelter: 12%
- LSEXIT – On Street: 2%
- LSEXIT – Residential Program: 9%
- LSEXIT – Mental Hospital: 0%
- LSEXIT – Correctional Institution/Detention: 1%
- LSEXIT – Another Living Situation: 1%
- LSEXIT – Do Not Know: 3%
- LSEXIT – No Response Provided: 12%

Based on the available RHYMIS data for the entire 3-year grant cycle the following outcomes related to living situation at exit could be delineated:

- Living Situation at Entrance – Private Residence: 80%
- LSEN – Shelter: 3%
- LSEN – On Street: 9%
- LSEN – Residential Program: 4%
- LSEN – Mental Hospital: .6%
- LSEN – Correctional Institution/Detention: 1%
- LSEN – Another Living Situation: 2%
- LSEN – No Response Provided: .4%
- Living Situation at Exit – Private Residence: 54%
- LSEXIT – Shelter: 5%
- LSEXIT – On Street: 2%
- LSEXIT – Residential Program: 12%
- LSEXIT – Mental Hospital: .1%

- LSEXIT – Correctional Institution/Detention: 1%
- LSEXIT – Another Living Situation: 2%
- LSEXIT – Do Not Know: 1%
- LSEXIT – No Response Provided: 21%

### What the Numbers Tell Us

The RHYMIS data provides both encouraging and distressing news related to the RHH Demonstration Project. The encouraging information that can be garnered from the data available for the three year cycle includes:

- 80% of youth accessing services entered services from a “Private Residence” and 55% of those were served without needing to access residential host home services;
- programs were able to decrease the number of youth on the street from 9% at time of entry to 2% at time of exit;
- programs increased the number of youth in residential programs at the time of exit to 12% compared to 4% at time of entry which could indicate youth and families had greater access to needed services as a result of service linkages established by RHH projects;
- 857 youth received services through the RHH project over the course of the 3-year grant cycle;
- of the 857 youth accessing services 70% received therapeutic counseling services; and,
- only 1% of youth exited to “unknown” locations.

The first issue related to the data pulled from RHYMIS is the volume of data that is either incomplete or missing.

Over the course of the three year period there is only one year (FY10) in which all of the funded RHH grantees reported data; in the other two years, 21% (FY09) and 28% (FY11) of the grantees had no data available in RHYMIS. As stated earlier there are a number of potential reasons for the lack of data during the FY09 and FY11 reporting periods, including:

- a. Grantee data entry errors including failing to designate youth with the special “ZZ” code set by CSC as an identifier for youth accessing services in order to differentiate youth accessing RHH services versus non-RHH basic center services;
- b. Grantees with no data available in RHYMIS served no youth in their respective RHH programs during those reporting periods; and/or,
- c. Grantees failed to report through RHYMIS for youth served with FYSB funding.

Additionally, over the course of the three year grant cycle, 22% of youth entered into RHYMIS had incomplete data related to entry/exit date, critical issues identified at the time of entry into services, services provided during RHH program participation, and/or living situation at entry and exit.

As stated earlier this lack of consistent completion of RHYMIS data entry places all data for the overall project in jeopardy as it is not possible to know the actual number/percentage of youth that identified a

particular critical issue, received a specific type of services, and/or their living situation at entrance and exit. It is not possible to determine the exact number of youth that accessed either residential or non-residential services through the RHH Demonstration Project as approximately one-fourth of the youth entered into the system have incomplete records and for two-thirds of the grant cycle between 21 and 28% of grantees failed to submit any data related to their project.

Concerns that were raised as a result of the RHH data provided include:

- 50% of youth served having “education” identified as a critical issue while only 38% have documentation indicating education was a service provided;
- 38% of youth had “alcohol and drug” identified as a critical issue while only 3% have documentation that an alcohol and drug abuse assessment or treatment were provided;
- Alcohol and drug prevention and education is a required service of Basic Center Programs (BCP) yet only 28% of youth accessing RHH projects received this service;
- Counseling is a required service of BCPs yet 30% of youth did not receive this service;
- Community Service Learning (CSL) is a required component of BCPs and only 3% of youth are documented to have participated in CSL; and,
- Aftercare and a written aftercare plan are both required components of BCPs however aftercare was only documented as a service provided to 48% of youth and only 13% of youth had a written aftercare plan documented;

### What the Demonstration Project has Shown Us

When asked what they would say to other grantees considering providing BCP services through a host home model RHH Demonstration Project grantee comments included:

- establishing trust within the community to be served is a key factor in being successful in rural communities;
- knowing your state and local licensing regulations and begin the process of becoming licensed as a host home as soon as is feasible;
- developing a plan for recruiting and licensing host homes immediately;
- having a detailed sustainability plan to ensure on-going program funding;
- being creative and thinking outside the box when developing program objectives/outcomes; and,
- being detail oriented when collecting data.

In addition to the grantee comments above, the RHH Demonstration Project has provided much information that can be utilized by FYSB as well as existing and potential grantees considering converting to or beginning a host home model Basic Center Program. It is clear from the grantees participating in this demonstration that initiating host home services is difficult and time consuming. Many of the demonstration project grantees were still working through the licensing process during the second year of the grant cycle and some were still in the process during the third and final year of the project. Grantees that were already operating a host home model program as well as those licensed to license their own host homes rather than relying on an outside entity (i.e. state child welfare

organization) were better able to recruit, train, and retain host home families and serve a greater number of RHY than those new to the host home model.

Grantees in this demonstration project demonstrated that there is a general lack of knowledge and/or understanding of the issue of homeless youth in rural areas and they worked diligently to bring youth homelessness as well as the issues faced by RHY to the forefront of their communities. Fifty-three percent of grantees, responding to the August 2011 RHYTTAC survey, stated they would definitely continue providing host home services and another 24% indicated they were unsure of continuing services beyond federal funding due to fiscal concerns but indicated they would continue if fiscally feasible. If a grantee is considering opening a host home model then the experience of the demonstration project participants will be invaluable in understanding the complexities of licensing standards at the state and local level, the most effective host home recruitment and retention strategies, and outreach methods that attract youth eligible for RHY services in rural areas.

## Appendix E: Ryan's House for Youth Best Practices Manual

# Host Home Best Practices

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## Six Keys to Host Home Success

### Protection

*Create a safe, home-like environment with caring individuals in the local community to provide shelter to unaccompanied, homeless youth who want to finish their education.*

1. Establish and Implement a Thorough Vetting Process
2. Provide Regular and Consistent Home Safety Checks
3. Ensure Confidentiality of Host Home Locations
4. Obtain Full Coverage Insurance Including Professional Liability

### Education

*Support Host Home Families with training, coaching, and the feedback they need to successfully help support a youth out of crisis towards healthy self-sustainability*

1. Youth Must Be Enrolled In or Working Toward Enrolling In Some Form of Education (GED, Trade School, High School, Community College, etc.)
2. Provide Host Homes with Basic Trainings plus Specialized Trainings Tailored For Specific Youth being housed in the home.
3. Provide training reinforcement, support, and feedback through a 24/7 hotline

### Inspiration

*Provide hope to youth in crisis and create a network of caring individuals that will carry them forward as they work toward their goals and achieve their dreams for the future*

1. Empower Youth to See Their Full Potential
2. With Youth Guidance provide support and encouragement to develop a Healthy Support System
3. Develop Youth Goal Driven Activities
4. Empower Youth to Share Their Stories

### Communication

*Structuring an avenue for healthy dialog between youth and those who work alongside them*

1. At least 2 In-Person Meetings Before Match
2. Daily, Weekly, and Monthly Check-Ins
3. 24/7 Case Management
4. Quarterly Biological Family Reports For Those Under 18 Years Of Age
5. Intentionally Youth Centered Plan, Goals, and Direction

### Commitment

*A commitment to care, encourage and assist with basic needs, schooling, employment, and to provide a continued support network even after transitioning into self-sustainability*

1. Guarantee That All Youth Have Medical
2. Guarantee That All Youth Have identification
3. Guarantee That All Youth Have Food Benefits
4. Guarantee That All Youth Have Access to Education and School Supplies
5. Guarantee That All Youth Are Given Resume and Employment Assistance
6. Provide All Youth With Clothing and Toiletries
7. Continue Support Even After Sustainability

### Celebration

*Establish appropriate systems to measure, reward and reinforce positive behaviors, motivate youth to do their best and commemorate all accomplishments large and small*

1. Peer to Peer Recognition
2. Reward Goals Met
3. Celebrate Milestones

# **Breakdown of Six Keys to Host Home Success**

## **Article I. Protection**

Create a safe, home-like environment with caring individuals in the local community who will shield, shelter and nurture

### **Section 1.01 Establish and Implement a Thorough Vetting of Youth and Host Family**

#### **a) Youth**

The younger the youth, the more information is available through teachers, family, counselors, etc. Youth over 18 are harder to vet minus a thorough background check. All youth fill out an intake with a basic needs assessment. (See attached Form A)

#### **b) Host Family**

The Host Family fills out an application (See attached Form B) and a background check for every individual residing in the home over the age of 18. Positive personal references are also required.

### **Section 1.02 Provide Regular and Consistent Home Safety Checks**

- a) Each home is visited by Host Home Program Staff before a youth ever enters the home to ensure that it is safe, clean and appropriate. Home Safety Checklist is filled out and signed by all parties. (See attached Form C)
- b) The student will visit the home and see his/her room before making a decision on moving into a long-term placement.
- c) The Host Home Program Staff will help the youth move in and get situated.
- d) The Host Home Program Staff will include random visits after placement.

### **Section 1.03 Ensure Confidentiality of Host Home Locations**

For there to be security and safety for both the youth and the Host Family, the biological family will not be given the address of the Host Family home. Biological families will receive quarterly reports (see Section 4.04) and have the opportunity to see their child at anytime that the youth and family agree on. All meetings will be held in a public space.

### **Section 1.04 Obtain Full Coverage Insurance including Professional Liability**

- a) The Host Home Organization is required by law to have insurance through a Washington State approved insurance company.
- b) It is in the best interest of the Host Home organization to be fully covered with General Liability for its Directors and Officers, AND Professional Liability for all Host Home Staff.

## **Article II. Education**

***Support Host Home Families with training, coaching, and the feedback they need to successfully help support a youth out of crisis and onto healthy self-sustainability***

## **Section 2.01 Youth Must Be Enrolled In or Working Toward Enrolling In Some Form of Education (GED, Trade School, High School, Community College, etc.)**

The greatest way to break the cycle of poverty and homelessness is education. It is a proven fact that when there is the expectation of graduation along with support (especially for those with IEP, 504 accommodations, etc.) youth will do better in their Host Home. It is important to have a good partnership with the Homeless liaisons in the local school districts as well as the advocates who can provide support to families who are hosting youth with IEPs and other special needs.

## **Section 2.02 Provide Host Homes with Basic Trainings plus Specialized Trainings For Specific Youth Being Housed In The Home**

- a) Each family should be trained in De-escalation Techniques and Trauma Informed Care Basics at a minimum. Mental Youth First Aid is also suggested.
- b) Specialized trainings specifically designed to each youth being housed in the home for example (ADHD, Bipolar Disorders, PTSD, Schizophrenia, etc.)
- c) Discipline policies are important so that the Host Family, youth and program all understand the procedures for best way to deal with a disciplinary situation. (See attached Form D)

## **Section 2.03 Provide Training Reinforcement, Support and Feedback Through a 24/7 Hotline**

This may be the most important feature to the Host Home Program and definitely the best use of time. This feature allows the host home to be the most effective. Host families need to know that you have their back and that they are not alone in an emergency or crisis. It is important that they have a sounding board. With this as an offering to them, host families relax more and feel more successful.

## **Article III. Inspiration**

*Provide hope to the youth in crisis and create a network of caring individuals that will carry them forward as they work toward their goals and achieve their dreams for the future*

### **Section 3.01 Empower Youth To See Their Full Potential**

Most youth have been told so many times that they are unworthy of love or anything positive, and they believe it. Working on goals that the youth shape and form, broken down into easy steps (the more the better), the youth will feel more successful and begin seeing their own value and ability for change and growth.

### **Section 3.02 With Youth Guidance Provide Support and Encouragement to Develop a Healthy Support System**

Help provide a counselor that the youth is comfortable with. In conjunction with the counselor, create a supportive case management team. Utilize the already supportive people in the youth's life such as family, friends, school supports, etc. Assemble these individuals together monthly, this will prove to the youth they are surrounded with support and caring individuals through

life's next steps. If a youth feels encouraged, they will continue to try, if a youth doesn't have the reassurance they will often struggle and fall.

### **Section 3.03 Develop Youth Goal Driven Activities**

Youth know best what they need and what they dream for their own futures. It is best to let youth direct (within reason) the plan for achieving their goals. It is best to be mindful, as said in Section 3.01, to make the steps short and easy to foster a strategy of success.

### **Section 3.04 Empower Youth to Share Their Stories**

It is empowering to tell your own story and it can bring immense healing to the youth. Youth can help advocate in their own communities to bring awareness of the struggles of homelessness for youth and how it looks so different than the homelessness for adults. Youth are also best for advocating for legislative changes, both state and federal levels. When lawmakers listen to the plight of homeless youth it brings to the surface the vulnerability of this often invisible homeless population.

## **Article IV. Communication**

### ***Structuring an avenue for healthy dialog between youth and those who work alongside them***

#### **Section 4.01 At Least Two In-Person Meetings Before Match**

- a) The first meeting needs to be with the student and their biological parents or guardians. The parent(s) will need to sign the Parent Responsibility and Childcare Authorization Form (See attached Form E). Parents need to not only understand what they are allowing someone else to do in their stead, but also what obligations they continue to be responsible for concerning their child. The parent(s) are given the information concerning the Host family and depending on the situation, a time and date to meet the Host Family. If mediation is possible, then a date and time will be set for those meetings to follow.
- b) There should be at least two meetings with the youth prior to moving into a Host Home. The first meeting should be held in public space, either the program's office or a restaurant/coffee shop. There the youth meet the Host Family and each party is allowed to ask any questions they would like of the other. No one is forced to answer questions they do not feel comfortable responding to. If the youth and the Host Family are getting along, it is up to the Host Family, not the program to invite them to visit their home. (Discussed in Host Home Training)
- c) The next meeting, would be attended in the Host Family's (already safety checked) home by the youth and the Housing Coordinator or Case Manager. The youth is given a tour of the home and most importantly their room. House rules are discussed and if time allows then contracts are gone over and signed between the youth and the Host Family. (See attached Forms F & G and H) These forms are not legal documents, nor do they claim to be, these are to create good communication and understanding between the parties. These contracts are just boilerplates and should be changed to fit the youth and Host Family.
- d) After three weeks, check in calls should start every week if things are going well. It is a good policy to keep the desirable amount of communication going but not so much that the family is

tired of hearing from the organization. Youth need to continue weekly face-to-face check-ins with their case manager as well.

#### **Section 4.02 Daily, Weekly and Monthly Check-ins**

- a) After the family is established, monthly check-ins by phone as well as personal visits to the home usually are the next phase. Youth need to continue weekly face-to-face check-ins with their case manager as well.
- b) After a youth moves in, there should be a call the following morning to both the Host family and the youth separately to see how things went the night before. It is always important to ask the youth when alone so they can feel comfortable to fully share. To fully support the family, continue calls daily for the first week and then drop to every 3 days for a few weeks. Youth need to continue weekly face-to-face check-ins with their case manager as well.

#### **Section 4.03 24/7 Case Management**

The most important feature of the Host Home program is to be able to offer 24/7 case management. Many times Host Families need to have someone to talk to in the evening or middle of the night. Emergency hospital visits, curfew issues, bedtime confrontations, etc. don't happen during office hours. Due to the late hour, a sleep deprived person with tempers rising can sometimes just decide that the stress isn't worth it, which causes a Host Family to just decide it is over. A phone call to a case manager usually calms the family down and holds them off until they can meet in the morning. Usually the situation can be resolved with a phone call and not a physical visit, but sometimes it does and sometimes it needs to be putting the youth into an emergency Host Home overnight till everyone can talk in the morning.

#### **Section 4.04 Quarterly Biological Family Reports For Those Under 18 Years Of Age**

Families who are going through disagreements with their youth need mediation. Many times it is unhealthy for the biological family to have direct contact with a host family and need the organization as a go between. The best way to keep the communication open between biological families and the Host Family is to have quarterly reports about school, dentist and doctors appointments, etc. (See attached Form I)

#### **Section 4.05 Intentionally Youth Centered Plan, Goals, and Direction**

As was stated in Section 3.03, it is important that youth help identify what their goals and dreams are and aid in the creation of their plan and direction for the future. If youth are to succeed they need to be a part of the process.

### **Article V. Commitment**

***Promising to care, encourage and assist with basic needs, schooling, employment, etc. and to continue to support even after sustainability***

### **Section 5.01 Guarantee That All Youth Have Medical**

Every youth is eligible for health care and should receive help obtaining it if they do not already have it. They also should have a local primary care physician. Make sure that the primary care doctor takes the youth's coverage plan. Many times it is difficult for a homeless youth to find a physician on their own so they need assistance.

### **Section 5.02 Guarantee That All Youth Have I.D**

The hardest part for life as a homeless youth is keeping important documents together and many do not have the appropriate I.D. to obtain employment, get housing or get medical and food benefits. (Youth do not need I.D. to enroll in school due to the McKinney-Vento Law.) It is sometimes difficult to obtain I.D. through parents, sometimes they feel territorial about these items and won't release them and sometimes they will hold onto them as a form of punishment. Either way, it is important for all youth to have at least a State I.D. card on them at all times.

### **Section 5.03 Guarantee That All Youth Have Food Benefits**

Food benefits for youth are sometimes harder to get than I.D. If they had been on a state assisted food program with their family in the past, it can be difficult to get their own changed over. It is a good idea to put in the time to obtain this for the youth you serve. Consistent nighttime food sources are usually the hardest part of homelessness for a youth. Even when a youth has a place to stay they are usually going without a nighttime meals. School provides breakfast (if a homeless youth can get there on time) and lunch, but in the evening it is dependent upon their transportation, which can be tough in a rural setting or costly in an urban setting. Even if a youth is in a host home, food benefits for the youth may take an added financial burden off the family allowing them to afford to give that young person a place to sleep.

### **Section 5.04 Guarantee That All Youth Have Access to Education and School Supplies**

With the assistance of the homeless liaisons in the school district, this is the easiest to accomplish. It is a requirement, by federal law, that all children have access to education without barriers, such as I.D., shot records, school transfers, living location, etc. The homeless liaison can help a student enroll, waive school fees, help with transportation and provide school supplies. Homeless Liaisons can be the best allies for helping youth as well as identifying who in the district needs a safe home.

### **Section 5.05 Guarantee That All Youth Are Given Resume and Employment Assistance**

All homeless youth are looking for independence and to start over from the past home situations that caused their homelessness in the beginning. For many youth the road to success starts with a job. It provides not only income, but most importantly self-esteem and something to get up for in the morning, especially if they are out of school or it is summer. Resume help is available through many community groups and businesses, Work Source, is a great resource for any employment assistance. As a Host Home Program, it is best to partner with local businesses in your area and create a job pool where partnerships can be made. A business can contact your group first when they are looking to hire. It becomes another success for the youth if they know

that they are guaranteed an interview. With more and more successes they start to feel empowered to do anything.

### **Section 5.06 Provide All Youth With Clothing and Toiletries**

Creating a clothing closet for teens in your area is quick and easy and inexpensive (even free). If your organization or a church or service group in your area has a 10x10 or 12x12 space and some shelves you are in business. Everyone gives clothing away and once you let the community know you are looking for items, they will come in droves. It is a great way to provide for the homeless youth dignity and choice. The youth can “shop” for free and try things on. Make sure that sizes are labeled and together and that you only take in gently used clothing and only NEW underwear, socks and bras for safety reasons. Be sure to offer things such as swim wear, prom dresses, interview clothes, etc. Just because they are homeless doesn't mean they don't have activities that require other types of attire. It is also beneficial to have toiletries of every kind, feminine hygiene products, unused make up, etc. in small sizes for youth on the street and large sizes for youth in Host Families. If room allows it is also beneficial to stock tents, sleeping bags, blankets, and yoga mats (to keep the ground under their sleeping bag dry). Having these available keeps the cost low for your Host Homes and allows the homeless youth in your community to be clean and dry. Volunteer laundry people to clean donations before hand helps ensure that all clothing being offered is in good shape and sanitary. Gift cards can also be collected if space is an issue.

### **Section 5.07 Continue Support Even After Sustainability**

A lot of people wonder why this is important to the success of the program and for the youth. It can usually be answered with a return question, When you were successfully on your own did you ever need your support system or family again? The answer is of course, yes. We all need a support system to help encourage us when life gets hard and help us celebrate when times are good. Do not think that after a youth has moved successfully into a stable situation that they don't need you anymore. They will just need you in another way. Maybe it is a monthly call the first year then a quarterly check in years after that. They will always appreciate that you still care.

## **Article VI. Celebration**

***Establish appropriate systems to measure, reward and reinforce positive behaviors, motivate youth to do their best and commemorate all accomplishments large and small***

### **Section 6.01 Peer to Peer Recognition**

Teens will naturally praise and criticize each other. This you will see best in support group for those youth in a Host Home. Celebration can easily be identified each meeting when you share accomplishments. Have small rewards such as a snack size candy that each youth gets when they recognize in either themselves or others a specific achievement made since the prior meeting.

### **Section 6.02 Reward Goals Met**

This celebration of achievements is for the Case Manager and/or Host Family to be in charge of. This is the time for a youth to be encouraged, praised and rewarded for meeting or surpassing a goal. It is important for the youth to see that healthy adults in their lives value their accomplishments and recognize their value and determination. When they see the support from the adults in their life they will see their ability to strive for the next goal.

### **Section 6.03 Celebrate Milestones**

This is the best part of the job, being there to see youth graduate from high school, or college, GED program or trade school. This is celebrating a marriage or the birth of a child. This can even mean sitting with them when a friend or relative dies. We all have major milestones in our development and in our lives. Every one of us needs people in their lives to go through these times with. These celebrations can me to celebrate just one youth in your program or every June celebrate all of the graduations. You can celebrate large or small, but the import thing to remember is to celebrate often. Working with this population of youth is hard work but there are always things to rejoice in.

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## Student Intake / Needs Assessment Form

**First Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Last Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DOB (mm/dd/yy):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Cell Phone ##:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Gender:**

Female

Transgender Female to Male

Male

Transgender Male to Female

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Disability ?:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Race/Ethnicity:**

Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander

Asian

American Indian/Alaska Native

Caucasian

Black/African American

Hispanic

Don't Know

Do not wish to provide information

**Current Housing Situation:**

Literally Homeless

Stably Housed

Unstably Housed or at risk of losing housing

Uncertain

**Previous Living Situation:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Basic Needs Assessment:**

Food Card

Daily Meals

Medical Insurance

Doctor / Dental Services

I.D / Social Security Card

Employment Assistance / Resume Help

Counseling / Mental Health

Drug Detox / Rehab

Transportation

Family Mediation

Housing

Education Assistance / Enrollment / Tutoring

**Services**

**Staff**

**Provided:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby affirm that the information indicated on this form is accurate and I am voluntarily providing it to Organizations Name with my permission to share this information with referral services, school personnel, and state agencies.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** (mm/dd/yy) \_\_\_\_\_

## **APPLICATION TO HOST**

Thank you for your interest in hosting a youth through our Host Family Program (HFP). Please review and complete the following application. Be sure that all adults over the age of 18 in the home initial the bottom of each page in the appropriate space and sign the last page.

Please return the completed, signed application and mail to:

If you have any questions, please feel free to call or email. Thank you and we look forward to being a part of your hosting experience.

# APPLICATION TO HOST

## Family Information (Please Print)

### Host

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Last, First, Middle, Maiden

Birthdate: \_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Address:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

How Long Employed: \_\_\_\_\_

Driver's License #: \_\_\_\_\_

### Host

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Last, First, Middle, Maiden

Birthdate: \_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: : \_\_\_\_\_

Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Address:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

How Long Employed: \_\_\_\_\_

Driver's License #: \_\_\_\_\_

I am / We are: (circle one)      SINGLE      MARRIED      PARTNERS

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**APPLICATION TO HOST**

**Family Members in the Home:**

Other Children (under age 18) at Home:

Name                                      Age/DOB                                      Biological / Adopted & When

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Other Adults Living in the Home:

Name                                      Age/DOB                                      Relationship to Family

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\*\*All adults age 18 and over must have background clearances completed.

Do you own any firearms? Yes No      If yes, how are they secured/stored?

Do you have a pool? Yes No      If yes, how is it secured?

**Other Information**

Family Hobbies and Interests: \_\_\_\_\_

What are your reasons for hosting? \_\_\_\_\_

## APPLICATION TO HOST

### Host Preferences

We would like to host (number of): \_\_\_\_\_ youth

Approximate ages preferred: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender Preference: Male    Female    Either

Special Requests (if any): \_\_\_\_\_

### Other Hosting Experiences

Have you hosted in the past? (Circle one)    Yes    No

If Yes, when: \_\_\_\_\_

With what program: \_\_\_\_\_

How many children did you host? \_\_\_\_\_

What was the outcome of that experience? \_\_\_\_\_

Information about that program you would like to share? \_\_\_\_\_

How did you hear about the Host Family Program? \_\_\_\_\_

## APPLICATION TO HOST

### Home Study

Do you have a current foster care license? (circle one)    Yes                  No

If Yes, date issued: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a home visit that is less than one-year-old? (circle one)    Yes    No

If Yes, Agency Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever had a home visit denied / declined?

Yes    No

If Yes, write explanation on separate sheet.

### Home Safety Check

You will be required to have a complete home safety check. Please contact the HFC to schedule an appointment.

## APPLICATION TO HOST

### Criminal Clearance

Have you ever been arrested for, charged or convicted of, any crimes (misdemeanor or felony), including, but not limited to: shoplifting, fraud, theft, DUI/DWI, domestic violence, child abuse, assault, aggravated assault, or possession of a controlled substance?

Host: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

Host: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

**Please explain any "Yes" answers on a separate sheet of paper.**

*\*Answering "YES" to the above question does **not** automatically disqualify you from participating in the hosting program, but providing false answers or deliberately withholding information could negatively affect your application.*

### Background Checks

Criminal clearance checks are required for each adult (age 18 and over) living in the home. Please see attached application forms.

Please list all states that you have lived in

\_\_\_\_\_

Our Social Security Numbers are:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ SS# \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ SS# \_\_\_\_\_

### Child Protective Services Clearances:

Host Parents are required to have a Child Protective Services child abuse clearance. These clearances can take a while to be returned, please fill out the attached form to obtain clearance on your behalf.

## APPLICATION TO HOST

### Medical Self-Disclosure:

**Host:** \_\_\_\_\_

Have you been (within the last five years) or are you currently under treatment for any medical, psychiatric, addiction or emotional condition?

(Circle one)      Yes      No

If "Yes", please explain condition(s), date diagnosed and reason for treatment:

\_\_\_\_\_

Primary physician's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Host:** \_\_\_\_\_

Have you been (within the last five years) or are you currently under treatment for any medical, psychiatric, addiction or emotional condition?

(Circle one)      Yes      No

If "Yes", please explain condition(s), date diagnosed and reason for treatment:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Primary physician's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

WHILE THIS INFORMATION DOES NOT NECESSARILY PREVENT US FROM HOSTING, WE UNDERSTAND THAT FAILURE TO PROVIDE COMPLETE AND HONEST INFORMATION WILL RESULT IN AUTOMATIC DISQUALIFICATION FROM CONSIDERATION.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## APPLICATION TO HOST

### Key Points:

- I/we understand that I/we will be allowed to host a child only after submitting an approved home safety check as well as criminal clearance checks.
- I/we agree to pay for the costs to provide room and board.
- I/we understand that the child's stay is **not** guaranteed and may be cancelled for various reasons.
- I/we understand that the program cannot refund funds to a host family after the funds have been committed or spent.
- During my/our involvement with this program, I/we agree to engage in a conduct that is appropriately respectful of others and to abide by any incidental instructions that may be given by the program coordinators.
- I/we understand that under no circumstances is hitting or using force towards a student acceptable and that this organization will remove the student from my/our home if abuse is suspected.
- I/we agree to comply with the weekly check-in schedule set forth.
- I/we understand the importance of preparing for hosting a child. Therefore, I/we agree to participate in the training provided.
- I/we understand and agree that the Program Leadership/Board of Directors has the right to reject any application with no explanation.
- I/we understand that this organization is not an adoption agency nor is it affiliated with one. The children participating in the program are not part of an adoption process.
- I/we agree to be sensitive to alcohol consumption by others in the presence of the youth in my/our care.

---

Signature Host

---

Print Name and Date

---

Signature Host

---

Print Name and Date

## APPLICATION TO HOST

**To complete the application packet, please include the following:**

Photocopy of drivers license \_\_\_\_\_

Photocopy of proof of auto insurance \_\_\_\_\_

Photocopy of proof of homeowners insurance \_\_\_\_\_

Family Photo \_\_\_\_\_

Background check forms \_\_\_\_\_

Host Family Contract \_\_\_\_\_

3 Personal References \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Home: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Inspection By: \_\_\_\_\_

## HOME SAFETY CHECKLIST

### **GENERAL**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone is available in case of emergency
- \_\_\_\_\_ Well water clearance must be obtained if water is from a private source.
- \_\_\_\_\_ House appears reasonably neat and clutter free.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Windows have curtains or shades to provide privacy.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Windows are intact and open windows can be closed without difficulty.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Floorings are clean and in good repair.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Electrical switches and receptacles are in good working order.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Type of heating, \_\_\_\_\_, is in good working order, well vented, and able to be turned off.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Heating capable of heating entire house to comfort. If not, what are alternative modes of heating? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ Air Conditioning system is operable and in good working order.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Hot water source is large enough for household needs and area around it is clean.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Hot water is between 105 and 120 degrees at the faucets.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Smoke detectors are working, properly placed, and batteries are checked regularly (every 3 months). A working smoke detector must be present in or outside the student's bedroom.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Hallways and bedrooms have clear passages, and all rooms including hallways, passages, and outside doorways and walkways have adequate lighting.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Furniture is in good condition.
- \_\_\_\_\_ All doors, doorways and screen doors are in good repair, and can be locked from the inside.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Flashlights are readily available in case of power failure and batteries are checked regularly (every 3 months).
- \_\_\_\_\_ If firearms or other weapons are owned and stored in the house, they are stored unloaded in a locked cabinet and ammunition is stored and locked in a separate location.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Fire extinguishers are readily available and fully charged, especially in the kitchen.

## **KITCHEN**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Refrigerator and freezer are in good condition and maintain appropriate temperatures to prevent food spoilage.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Alcohol (beer, wine liquors) are stored away from students (preferred a locked cabinet).
- \_\_\_\_\_ Counter, sinks and work areas are clean, sanitary and in good condition.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Stove/oven operate properly.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Dishwasher (if present) is working properly at appropriate water temperature assuring sanitation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Adequate space to store food.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cooking and eating utensils are in good condition. Adequate place settings and seating in dining area for all household members to eat together.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sufficient kitchen area for food storage and preparation according to the family's size.

## **BATHROOM**

- \_\_\_\_\_ All prescription medicines are in a locked box or inaccessible to youth.
- \_\_\_\_\_ First Aid kit is stored in a conveniently reachable place or supplies

are in a medicine cabinet. First Aid kit must contain tweezers, scissors, tape, band aids, gauze, antiseptic wipes, antiseptic ointment, thermometer (non mercury), cold pack, burn care packets, first aid non stick pads, elastic bandages/ace bandages, health care gloves, first aid guide.

\_\_\_\_\_ Bathroom facilities are working properly, are clean and sanitary.

\_\_\_\_\_ Adequate number of towels and linens are available for all household members.

## **GARAGE / OUTSIDE AREAS**

\_\_\_\_\_ There is an adequate number of trash containers.

\_\_\_\_\_ Garage is safe. If used for storage, items are stored in a safe manner.

\_\_\_\_\_ If washer and dryer are on the premises, they work properly and the area is free from clutter. If no laundry facilities are on the premises, the plan for laundry is:

\_\_\_\_\_ All chemical cleaners, disinfectants, insecticides, and other poisonous substances are stored away from food storage areas.

\_\_\_\_\_ Power tools and equipment are stored safely and/or locked away in garage

\_\_\_\_\_ Vehicle(s) are operational with lights, horn and signals working.

\_\_\_\_\_ Vehicle is able to transport all family members with seats and working seat belts for each passenger.

## **BEDROOMS**

\_\_\_\_\_ There are no more than two children per bedroom.

\_\_\_\_\_ Youth has own room or is sharing a room with a youth of the same gender and not with an adult.

\_\_\_\_\_ No room commonly used for other purposes can be used as a bedroom and a bedroom cannot be a passageway to another room.

\_\_\_\_\_ Mattress & pillows are in good condition.

## **GROUNDS**

\_\_\_\_\_ If there is a swimming pool / spa at the home, condo, apartment complex or sub-division, Toxic pool maintenance products are kept in locked storage. Life preservers are readily accessible and the

area is kept free of glass, sharp objects and debris.

\_\_\_\_\_ Fence, if applicable, is in good condition.

\_\_\_\_\_ Yard is free of debris, spare auto parts, appliances, scrap, etc.  
Non-operational vehicles are kept locked, repaired promptly or  
towed off premises.

**SIGNATURES**

\_\_\_\_\_

Host Parent(s)

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Case Worker

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

CORRECTION PLAN:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Discipline policy

All of our students will struggle with their new living situation, with comes with nerves, expectations, and desires on both sides. Sometimes these situations should be overlooked, some discussed, and some disciplined. This policy was created to help the Host Family, the youth and the organization define who is in charge of the situation and how to move forward to create a better living environment for all concerned.

Occurrences such as staying in their room, not coming to meals, being quiet, etc. should be overlooked for a short time in the beginning. This occurs quite regularly as students are usually overwhelmed and trying to adjust not only to new people but also new surroundings (sometimes much nicer than they have ever been in before). If this occurs for more than 3 days please contact the office and an action plan will be created such as seeing if it is still a good match, if the environment is too stressful, and then how do we all make the student more comfortable and in turn help the Host Family feel more comfortable.

Occurrences such as consistently not doing chores, talking back, not doing homework, etc. should first be a call into the office and then a plan of action decided and written...things that would be included in this are home visit by a caseworker, finding out if there is more to the situation than it seems, is the student acting out because of outside tensions, school, etc. appropriate discipline actions will be agreed upon by all parties including the student. (Be it understood, that these and more issues usually occur during the 6<sup>th</sup> through 9<sup>th</sup> month of living with a host family. These students want to make sure that if they do wrong that they will still be cared for by the family and not be tossed aside again.)

Occurrences such as skipping school, using drugs or alcohol, not coming home, bringing in friends not approved, etc. should first be a call into the office and an emergency home visit would be scheduled. The plan of action is as follows:

- First offence – Find out the bigger story and decide on a form of discipline agreed upon by Host Family and Host Family Director.
- Second offence – If the same issue as already been addressed and discipline already occurred for this offence and a similar situation arises then the youth will be given a stronger agreed upon discipline (more days of restriction, house arrest, etc.) and a warning of losing their housing.
- Third offence – If there is a third situation in the same vein as prior, the student will be removed from the home and potentially thrown out of the program. Youth who fall into this category will meet with the staff to determine the likelihood of success with another host home and if found not, and then will be removed from the Host Family Program all together. Youth can continue to receive support through counseling, mediation, and outreach services.

Host Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_

Host Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_

Host Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_

Coordinator Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_

**Parent Responsibility and Childcare Authorization Form**

I, the undersigned parent, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby grant the organization and it's assigned host family the authority to take temporary care of my child, \_\_\_\_\_. This grant of temporary authority shall begin on \_\_\_\_\_ and shall remain effective until terminated by the undersigned.

The above named caretaker(s) shall have the power to:

- seek appropriate medical treatment or attention on behalf of the child as may be required by the circumstances, including but not limited to, medical doctor and/or hospital visits
- authorize medical treatment or medical procedures with notification to parent
- make appropriate decisions regarding clothing, bodily nourishment, school and shelter
- explain and sign for absences from school
- pick up children from school
- sign release forms for school related activities
- have access to school records and be present at IEP meetings if applicable
- sign general release forms for driver's education, driver's licenses, etc.

I understand that as the Biological parent / legal guardian that I am not giving up my parental rights or responsibilities and there will times that I will be required to be in attendance of situations concerning the health of my child such as medical appointments, etc. and if I am not in attendance when required, I may have to answer to CPS or other state authorities.

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

State of Washington, County of \_\_\_\_\_

On this day, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ appeared before me, signed this form, and swore (or affirmed) that he/she understood its contents and that its contents are truthful.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Title \_\_\_\_\_

My appointment expires \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

**As a Hosted Student, I agree:**

\_\_\_\_\_ to stay with my host family for pre-designated point in time from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ to give my host parents at least two weeks notice of my intention to move out of the Host Home

\_\_\_\_\_ to release the organization and host family from any liability for any loss, damage, accident or injury while staying in the home

\_\_\_\_\_ to respect the rules, routines, and beliefs of my host family

\_\_\_\_\_ to help with basic chores around the home

\_\_\_\_\_ to keep my living area clean

\_\_\_\_\_ to be careful with all items in the home

\_\_\_\_\_ to ask before bringing friends or family members to the home

\_\_\_\_\_ to attend the Host Family student orientation given by the Host Family Coordinator

\_\_\_\_\_ to attend the Host Family student support group when available

***The organization reserves the right to remove a student from a home without notice in the event of inappropriate behavior by a host family member or student.***

Hosted Student \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Host Family Member \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Host Family Member \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Organization Staff Member \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

*(Please initial each line to show you have read and understand each request)*

**As a Host Family, I agree:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ to provide a welcoming, stable, and secure living environment for the student
- \_\_\_\_\_ to treat the student as a family member and invite the student to join in family activities/outings
- \_\_\_\_\_ to respect the rights, privacy, and culture of the student, including religious and political beliefs
- \_\_\_\_\_ to provide the student with a private room equipped with a comfortable bed (with linens, pillow, blankets or comforter), dresser or desk, chair, lamp, closet, and window
- \_\_\_\_\_ to provide Internet access
- \_\_\_\_\_ to provide evening and weekend meals, with one cooked meal at least five times a week, respecting the student's dietary needs
- \_\_\_\_\_ to explain house rules and expectations to the student (see Discussion Form)
- \_\_\_\_\_ to provide access to the washroom, laundry facilities, and cleaning equipment
- \_\_\_\_\_ to allow the student use of the household, including telephone, TV, DVD player, etc.
- \_\_\_\_\_ to familiarize the student with the host family's neighborhood
- \_\_\_\_\_ to provide adequate instruction in the use of the public transit system and bus routes to school
- \_\_\_\_\_ to provide the student with a key to the house by \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ to notify the Host Family Coordinator (HFC) promptly if any difficulties arise in dealing with the student, and to cooperate fully in resolving any such difficulties
- \_\_\_\_\_ to attend the host family orientation given by the HFC, if it is the first time hosting
- \_\_\_\_\_ to notify the HFC of any changes in family status or contact information
- \_\_\_\_\_ to notify the HFC of any family vacations without the student that exceed one week
- \_\_\_\_\_ to inform the HFC of any other students living in the home.
- \_\_\_\_\_ to release the organization from expenses related to long-distance phone calls made by the student or to damage caused by the student
- \_\_\_\_\_ to ensure smoke and carbon monoxide detectors in the home are in working order
- \_\_\_\_\_ to release the organization from any liability for any loss, damage, accident or injury while a student is staying in the home
- \_\_\_\_\_ to accept responsibility for maintaining adequate insurance coverage on both home and vehicle
- \_\_\_\_\_ to permit the HFC to conduct home inspections and review accommodations for the

student

- \_\_\_\_\_ have been given and read and understand the organization discipline policy

*(Please initial above to show you have read and understood each item.)*

The organization reserves the right to remove a student from a home without notice in the event of inappropriate behavior by a host family member or student.

Host Parent (1) \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Host Parent (2) \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Host Student \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Organization Staff \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### House Rules and Expectations Discussion Form

- 1. Use of Phone \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Meal Time \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Bed Time \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Chores \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. Laundry \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. Weekends \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. Church? \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. School \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. Job \_\_\_\_\_
- 10. Transportation \_\_\_\_\_
- 11. Curfew \_\_\_\_\_
- 12. Internet Use \_\_\_\_\_
- 13. Computer \_\_\_\_\_
- 14. Friends \_\_\_\_\_
- 15. Shower \_\_\_\_\_
- 16. Smoking? \_\_\_\_\_
- 17. Significant Other? \_\_\_\_\_
- 18. Family Visits \_\_\_\_\_
- 19. Snacks \_\_\_\_\_
- 20. Cooking \_\_\_\_\_
- 21. TV Time \_\_\_\_\_
- 22. Bedroom \_\_\_\_\_
- 23. Car? \_\_\_\_\_
- 24. Cell Phone? \_\_\_\_\_
- 25. Borrowing Items \_\_\_\_\_
- 26. Shower \_\_\_\_\_
- 27. Music Volume \_\_\_\_\_
- 28. Fridge Space \_\_\_\_\_
- 29. Storage \_\_\_\_\_
- 30. Other Things? \_\_\_\_\_





## Travel Authorization

I, the undersigned, \_\_\_\_\_, parent of \_\_\_\_\_, hereby grant \_\_\_\_\_, the authority to take my child, \_\_\_\_\_ on a trip to \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_.

The above named caretaker(s) shall have the power to:

- Travel by airplane to \_\_\_\_\_
- seek appropriate medical treatment or attention on behalf of the child as may be required by the circumstances, including but not limited to, medical doctor and/or hospital visits
- authorize medical treatment or medical procedures in an emergency situation
- make appropriate decisions regarding clothing, bodily nourishment, and shelter

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

### Disillusion of Host Family Partnership

The Organization has the right to dissolve any host family partnership at any time when it seems like an unfit situation for any party concerned. The Organization has the right to refuse the services of any host family that they feel are no longer a good fit for the program or organization.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Un-authorization Form

I, the undersigned parent, \_\_\_\_\_ hereby release \_\_\_\_\_ from temporary care of my child, \_\_\_\_\_. This release of temporary care shall begin on \_\_\_\_\_.

The above named caretaker(s) shall no longer have the power to:

- seek appropriate medical treatment or attention on behalf of the child as may be required by the circumstances, including but not limited to, medical doctor and/or hospital visits
- authorize medical treatment or medical procedures with notification to parent
- make appropriate decisions regarding clothing, bodily nourishment, school and shelter
- explain and sign for absences from school
- pick up children from school
- sign release forms for school related activities
- have access to school records and IEP meetings
- sign general release forms for driver's education, driver's licenses, etc.

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

State of Washington  
County of \_\_\_\_\_

On this day, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ appeared before me, signed this form, and swore (or affirmed) that he/she understood its contents and that its contents are truthful.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Title \_\_\_\_\_  
My appointment expires \_\_\_\_\_

## Mandated Reporter Acknowledgment

“Mandatory reporters” are persons or groups of persons who have frequent contact with children and families and are required by Washington’s State law to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect to CPS or to the appropriate law enforcement agency (RCW 26.44.030). It is the intent of the law that these designated persons, who are in positions to identify children who are at risk from abuse and neglect, will report suspected child abuse and neglect so that the need for protective services can be assessed.

Mandatory reporter training can be completed by watching the online video at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zss1oh7b57A> Once you have completed the video and understand your responsibilities please complete this form

If you would like this link emailed to you, or you are having problems viewing the video, please contact us at the office.

I acknowledge that I have seen and understand the video on Mandated Reporting. I understand that as a Host Family / Volunteer, I am a Mandated Reporter to the state of Washington.

Host Family Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Host Family Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Host Family Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Host Family Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

6/6/16

Thank you for taking the time to read Best Practices for Host Home Programs and for your interest in beginning a Host Home Program in your community. I am available for consultation and training. Please feel free to contact me at [ryanshouseforyouth@gmail.com](mailto:ryanshouseforyouth@gmail.com) for more information.

On behalf of the homeless youth everywhere,  
Thank You

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lori Cavender". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lori" being more prominent than the last name "Cavender".

Lori Cavender  
Founder / Executive Director  
Ryan's House For Youth  
Ryanshouseforyouth.org